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## THREE OF A KIND

By Baroness von Hutten

MR. WILLIAM SHERMAN sat down on a big black trunk for which its owner was at that moment making a frantic search in the hold, and looked again at the paper in his hand.

"I guess that's all, Molly," he observed, after a moment's reflection; "the pearls, the rug, the corals for Charlotte, the three bottles of chartreuse, the gloves, the silk stockings, and your new dresses. Anything else?"

He spoke cheerily, a trifle louder than was necessary, even in the babel of the Custom House, but from a peculiarity of voice, not from ostentation, and as he ceased speaking he gave a characteristically American touch to his soft hat which sent that obviously English article a couple of inches farther back from his brow in a way that meant weary satisfaction.

Mrs. Sherman, who had been given a chair by some gentle-souled government watchdog, smiled at her husband.

"Nothing that I can remember. You don't know how funny it seems to be actually *declaring* things, Billy, when I think how mama and I used to smuggle. It was almost the best part of coming home. You remember mama's Mechlin lace? I sewed it all inside my flannel petticoat once and marched over these very boards looking as innocent as a lamb!"

She laughed—a girlish laugh that dimpled her cheeks and danced in her eyes—and then she made a little face at this husband of hers who was

such a duck, and so all but brand-new.

"Shocked, Billy?"

"Not a bit. All women love to cheat the Government, except mother. I don't believe *she'd* have done it."

"Oh, Billy," Mrs. Sherman jerked her chair a little closer to his with a noise that curdled the nerves of an affronted spinster from St. Albans whose very underlinen was being examined by a brute of an officer, "Oh Billy, *do* you think she'll like me?"

"Like you? Well, I should rather think she would. How could she help it?"

"But—she's so *good*," persisted his wife, in whose brown eyes glinted little flecks of gold like those in that beautiful and disappointing beverage, *eau de vie de Dantzic*; "horribly good, isn't she?"

Sherman's eyes smiled tenderly, but his somewhat stolid, heavy-jawed face did not otherwise change.

"Good as gold," he answered, "and she'll love you to pieces."

"I hope she won't think me—well—too young and silly."

"You aren't a bit silly, little girl."

Molly shook her head. "I sometimes seem much sillier than I really am inside, you know, and then—well, we Southerners are always afraid of the New England conscience. Besides, dear, you mustn't mind my saying it, she has always lived in New Shakespeare, and if she *is* a little narrow-minded, I think you really ought to tell me, so that I sha'n't go cake-walking all over her feelings!"

"Oh, I'm not afraid of that—she *is* a little narrow-minded, but she'll

love you all to—here comes that chap, Molly."

Sherman and the customs officer went off together after the production of the dutiable articles, and after what seemed endless hours to Mrs. Sherman, her husband returned with a considerably flattened purse—for he carried a purse, this plebeian American—and together they left the charming and inspiring Custom House.

"To think of our getting in eight hours *too soon*," Molly began presently, as their cab threaded its perilous way uptown. "How surprised mama will be!"

"Is your mother in town already?" An uneasy look that had been on his face while they had talked of his mother, now appeared on hers.

"Oh, yes," she answered, rapidly, "didn't I tell you? She arrived four days ago—dear me, Billy, just look at that building; how many stories can it have? Is your office anywhere near here?"

"Fulton street. Look here, darling, have you thought how nice it would have been if—if someone could have been here to—to get the house in order?"

"Oh, yes, indeed I have. It had made me tremble to think of all the furniture from New Shakespeare waiting for us in boxes, all over the place. That's just what I wanted to speak to you about. Mama, for instance, has so much taste—I thought——"

"Mother is the best housekeeper in the world," he interrupted hurriedly; "you *will* love mother, Molly. And I can trust you not to mind her old-fashioned ways. Her mind may be a little narrow, but her heart is—as wide as the world."

"Yes, I am so anxious to see her. We must have her visit us as soon as we are settled."

Sherman gave an embarrassed laugh. "Oh, well—*settled*," he said, gazing out of the carriage window. "I guess you will find that there's not much *settling* to be done, dear. You see, Martha, my old nurse, came down with the furniture, and then——"

"Yes, I know; how very nice.

Dear mama will be so helpful to me, too. You see, Billy, I don't know one thing about housekeeping. Ever since I was thirteen I have been in Europe, first with Cousin Effie and then with mama, living in hotels and pensions, and when we came over here sometimes, *visiting* or living in hotels. Ever since I was thirteen!"

Sherman's face relaxed into a smile of tender amusement.

"Five whole years," he said, putting his arm around her. "What an age!"

When they rang at the door in West Forty-eighth street there was a long hush, and then at last a haggard, elderly woman appeared, and after some argument, and a hazy reference to her orders, allowed them to enter.

Molly stood quite still in the middle of the hall, looking at the hat-rack.

"Oh, Billy," she said, dimpling as she had dimpled at bones in the Catacombs, "that *must* have come from New Shakespeare!"

"Did," Sherman returned, laconically. "Ugly, isn't it? Never mind, we'll get another. Come on in, darling; this must be the parlor—I—there is something I want to tell you. Ah," he continued as they passed into the room on the right, "there's the mosaic table I told you about. Father bought it at the Centennial. A beauty, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes. It must have been very expensive," she returned, with a curious note of something like remorse in her voice. "Ah, the lovely roses! And the palm! That is surely dear mama's doing. How *sweet*!"

Sherman nodded. "Very likely. Look here, darling, there is something I must tell you. You may not like it, just at first, and—I should have told you before, but I couldn't make up my mind——"

Suddenly, to his amazement, his wife burst into tears, and sinking into a frightful embroidered chair, buried her face in its depths.

"Molly, good heavens, my sweetheart, it's nothing bad enough for *that*! Don't cry! It's only——"

"Oh, Billy, be quiet, and let me tell you," she sobbed wildly, "I have tried and tried, and I simply couldn't. You'll *never* forgive me, I know you won't. Oh, Billy——"

They had been married for over three months and he had never before seen her cry.

Sitting down by her, he drew her limp length out of the chair as he might have drawn a snail from its shell, and petted her into quietness.

"Of course I'll forgive you, dearest," he whispered; "don't be a goose. Now what is it? Just tell me and I'll not be angry. I promise."

"It's—it's about the house. You see, I was so afraid I should not know how to—housekeep—I don't know *one* thing about it——"

Sherman burst into a loud laugh of relief.

"Is *that* it! Well, you needn't worry a bit about *that*. I knew it would trouble you, and so—that's what I wanted to tell you—I've asked mother to come. She's upstairs now, dear, and will take all the bother and worry on her own shoulders——"

And then, to his utter amazement, his wife began to giggle, mopping her wet eyes on his handkerchief, and the giggle grew until it was a positive roar of nervous delight.

"Your mother! Oh, Billy Sherman, I shall die! It's mama who is here, and that was what I wanted to tell you! Is yours here too?"

"Of course she is! Well, this *is* a joke. I don't see why you cried, though. I'm delighted to have your mother come and I hope she'll pay us a good long visit."

Mrs. Sherman's laugh went out like a snuffed candle.

"Billy Sherman," she said solemnly, "it's not *that*. She has no other home and—and I've asked her to *live with us!*"

Sherman walked to the window, and stood for a moment looking out into the November dusk. Then he came back and said quietly:

"Well, dear, I'm glad you did, for—mother has come to live with us, too!"

"Will yez come upstairs to the ould ladies?"

The inebriated charwoman stood in the doorway.

"The ould ladies isn't dreshed," she went on, "so yez are to come up. It's chilly here. And I'm to go," she added suddenly, with unexpected vehemence. "And it's glad I am to go. *Three* old cats is too much for Cornelia Sullivan."

When she had gone, Molly turned to Sherman. "Who," she asked, giggling again, "who is the *third* 'old cat'?"

"She means Mrs. Graves," he answered, "poor Alvina's mother."

## II

"Dear Billy, I am so delighted to see you again! Just the nicest, most *simpatico* boy in the world!"

Mrs. Moberly Tillingham leaned across the table, and laid one hand on her son-in-law's arm. She was a very pretty woman, with a smooth pink face and delicate little features. Her black chiffon gown was rather wrinkled, and cut very low, and she carried a green quill fan.

"William is fleshier than he was," remarked old Mrs. Sherman, who wore black cashmere, with white ruches at her throat and wrists; "his father was fleshy, too."

"Boo, Billy, don't eat so much meat," laughed Molly. "I can't *bear* fat men, and you have been stodging away at that beef for twenty minutes!"

Mrs. Graves sighed and rubbed her long sad nose with a bony finger.

"Alvina used to urge him to eat," she said mournfully; "she was always so tender with him."

Molly was silent.

Alvina had been dead for several years—if Alvina were not dead, she, Molly, could not have been where she was unless the family had migrated to Utah, pleasant potential refuge of the polygamously inclined—but Mrs. Graves seemed to have failed to grasp that fact. The lugubrious woman with the appropriate name rarely opened her mouth without mentioning the first Mrs. William Sherman.

"Marie, sweet," babbled on Mrs. Tillingham, biting her lips in a way not calculated to conceal their amused trembling. "doesn't Mrs. Graves remind you of the dear marchesa?"

"Which marchesa, mama?"

"Why, Donna Beatreechy. Such a sweet woman," she added, turning to the elder Mrs. Sherman, "and a dear friend of mine. Something about Mrs. Graves's nose, I think it is, Marie-chen."

"It is the Smith nose," announced Mrs. Graves suddenly, "and Alvina had it, too."

Molly, who was looking at a very badly painted portrait of her predecessor, smoothed a smile in a drink of water. It was awful not to be able to throw a glance at Billy. He was a little slow, but when he did see a joke, his laugh was so big, and so—*dear*.

"Alvina had the Graves eyes," commented old Mrs. Sherman, kindly, and Molly dropped her napkin and fished for it while she grinned at the swift thought: "And now the grave has Alvina's eyes!"

Until her home-coming the little bride had hardly given a thought to Billy's first wife, but Alvina was very prominent here. As she straightened up again, a little red from the effort of stooping, her mother exclaimed suddenly, holding her water-glass with almost as much care as if it had been a beaded beaker of wine. "By the way, the George Moberlys are in town—the major told me this morning. You must ask them to dinner, dearest."

"Oh, the major? Is *he* here, too? I am glad!"

"Who is the major?" asked Mrs. Graves with funereal curiosity that was distinctively hers.

Molly laughed. "A lover of mama's. He has proposed to her every New Year's day and every Fourth of July since papa died; hasn't he, mama?"

"Silly child! He is my trustee, Mrs. Graves—Major Walsingham Carter—a most charming man. *Gentilhomme de la vieille roche*. Mrs. Sherman, you know."

Old Mrs. Sherman did not know, for her only tongue was a branch of the

American language, but she nodded kindly, and turned to her son.

"Mr. Howland told me the other day that you ought to try to get the button contract for the British army, William," she said; "it's going to be given at auction. Those new horn buttons are doing very well, James Howland said, and he's very much interested in what you wrote him from Paris about fancy buttons coming into style again. I guess he wants to start a new department."

Sherman nodded.

"I'll go and look him up tomorrow," he answered. "I've a lot of new ideas."

His grandfather had made horn and bone buttons by hand; his father had made them by machinery, and he himself had brought the business to New York. He liked buttons and had never seen any reason for being ashamed of them.

"You ought to try to get a commission for the Mandarin's pig-tail buttons, Billy," teased Molly; "or are they on the caps?"

"Alvina called him Willie," volunteered Mrs. Graves to Mrs. Tillingham.

"Did she, indeed? It is a *sweet* name, Willie. So is Guillaume and Guglielmo. I don't *quite* care for Wilhelm, though it is the Kaiser's name. My dear husband's name was Frederic—without a k," answered Mrs. Tillingham pensively, her head on one side.

"Mr. Graves's name was Alvin. Alvina was named for him—" Molly sprang to her feet. "Come along, Billy; Mrs. Sherman will excuse us, and I'm *dying* to see the rest of the house."

Sherman saw that she was on the point of bursting into nervous laughter, and so followed her out into the corridor. As the door closed she leaned against him, her face buried in his sleeve and shook silently.

Then, at last, she looked up. "Oh, Billy, I am ashamed! And I'm as sorry for her as I can be, but I can't help laughing. I thought I'd *die*! I'm sure she's awfully nice, but she is a little—peculiar, isn't she?"

As they went upstairs she added, wiping her eyes, "How long is she going to stay?"

He hesitated. "I—she has always lived with—us, ever since I married poor Alvina. They were burnt out while we—while we were on our wedding tour, and as our house was big we just—we all lived together, you see. Mother is very fond of her, and—so am I," he added loyally.

Molly squeezed his hand.

"What a dear you are," she said. "You mean that she is going to live with us? All right, Billy, I don't care. And perhaps after a bit she won't always talk about—about poor Alvina."

As a child, in its ignorance, will cheerfully climb into and push off a leaky and impossible boat, so Molly Sherman stepped into the queer craft offered her by her equally ignorant husband. Billy as he kissed her for her amiability did not realize that that amiability meant, as yet, nothing; that it was no test of character, no proof of patience; that it was only the half-careless, half-boastful cry, "I ain't afraid," of a child as it pushes off from shore in the unknown boat, toward unknown perils.

An hour later the two young people came down into the drawing-room, to find Mrs. Graves sitting by the fire feeding bits of chocolate to a remarkably long-legged, blind dog.

"Oh," cried Molly, "what a duck! Is it a *lamb*?" Sherman pinched her arm.

"It is poor Puff," he explained, patting the strange looking animal, and Molly understood.

"Did he belong to—poor Alvina?" she asked softly.

Mrs. Graves looked up, a gratified expression in her faded eyes. "Yes. She was very fond of him. She named him Puff when he was a puppy, because he looked like a powder-puff. Didn't he, Willie? He's worn off some, behind, now, but in front it's quite long, you see. Do you like dogs?"

### III

"MARRY is in the parlor," said Mrs. Sherman to her son, a few days later, as he came in.

"Marie is in the salon," Mrs. Tilling-

ham airily informed him, as she was coming downstairs; and, on going into the dining-room for a glass of water, Mrs. Graves, whom he found on her knees in front of the sideboard, poking about among the best china, told him plaintively that "Merry was in the sitting-room."

And yet they all meant the same thing!

The room, to which they referred, was a rectangular apartment carpeted in red and gray, papered in white and furnished strangely. A beautiful old mahogany table stood in the middle of it, at one side there was an Empire sofa covered with plush, a lace shawl draped the mantelpiece, and four of the chairs were of slate-colored felt, embroidered in colored wools. Then there was an upper stratum of gay silk pillows, a little buhl clock, a beautiful Persian rug in front of the fireplace, which was filled with cruelly artificial-looking artificial ferns, and a grand piano—Mrs. Sherman's wedding-present to her daughter-in-law.

This room had a most extraordinary effect on Molly. Sometimes it filled her with hilarity, sometimes with despair. When the long-legged dog lay stretched on the rug Billy had bought in Paris, confusion filled her soul.

The rug seemed to symbolize herself and life. Puff meant Alvina and death.

Alvina had embroidered the gay garlands of impossible flowers on those chill-looking chairs. It was to have been a set; but Death had laid his cold hands on her busy ones, and bade her cease working.

Mrs. Tillingham had bought, with her daughter's money, majolica pots which she filled with plants, bowls of glass and porcelain for cut flowers, a strip of church embroidery which was spread over the centre-table, and one or two knick-knacks, but—Alvina's chairs triumphed still.

The room was horrible. It might have passed muster in New Shakespeare, in the shadow of the original button-factory, but it was unspeakably awful in New York.



And on the afternoon of the dinner to be given to the George Moberlys, its awfulness had penetrated to the very soul of Molly Sherman, and sitting on the rug she wept in her despair. The George Moberlys, cousins of her dead father, were such nice people—so tasteful and so cultivated. They collected antique Finnish embroidery and Japanese engravings. Emma Moberly sang Sibelius' songs in Swedish and Dvorak's in Bohemian, and they always stayed with Lord Wace of Darrow when in England.

They had always been rich, whereas the Tillinghams had until now been wretchedly poor, and now that Molly had plenty of money, and a chance to show that she, too, had taste, that horrible drawing-room would spoil everything! It was a very real misery, of its kind, and the bride had huddled, disconsolately weeping, longer than she had sat in sorrow since her childhood.

And then, suddenly, ting-ting—tink-a-ting—a tiny joy-bell reached her mourning ear; a deliberate, light-hearted little carillon.

"Fanfan!"

Straightening up, she hastily dried her eyes and turned to the door, trying to look as if her poor little nose were no redder than usual. Then the door was pushed open, and a beautiful black poodle came mincing in.

"Oh, Fanfan, you dear thing! Where is mama?"

"Mama is here, my darling, trying to dispose of her coat on this—h'm!—this peculiar hat-rack! Why, *mon chou-choucheri*, what is the matter?"

Mrs. Tillingham, slim and graceful in her well-made gown, a largely-dotted veil drawn neatly over her complexion, looked so destined to rooms crowded with expensive new antiques which no one but an expert could tell were not old, that her daughter's tears flowed afresh.

Then the story came out, while Fanfan, who had stealthily departed from the scene, pattered elegantly upstairs, sniffing with evident disdain at the old-fashioned carpet as he went.

Mrs. Tillingham, being human, may have had her faults, but in moments like the present she was magnificent.

"Such a goose," she cried, when her daughter ceased speaking, "such a goosy-woosy-poosy! Why, do you know that Billy is worth nearly a million and a half? And that he adores you? Come, my *Herzgeliebte*, run up and bathe those silly eyes and we, you and I, will go out."

"But—*u-where*, mama?" asked Molly, still half-sobbing.

"To see him, and make him say that you may buy a few little things, under my guidance, to modernize this—this apartment a bit. Hurry, *cara*, it is nearly three already."

When Molly, entirely comforted, trusting to her mother as if she were again a child, had gone upstairs Mrs. Tillingham pushed up her veil, blew her nose with the delicacy that that operation requires from middle-aged ladies with sixteen-year-old complexions, and then started round the objectionable room, making mental notes as she went. She had just decided that the piano needed a priestly garment to cover its nakedness, when a loud yell burst into the silent sea of her surroundings, and then from upstairs came a series of despairing canine yelps and wails, and a huffing, scuffling noise as of something soft being bounced down the stairs.

Mrs. Tillingham rushed to the hall and beheld Fanfan descending the stair in bounds, while, in defiance of all the laws of gravitation, *under* him, the unfortunate and much less heavy Puff struggled and yapped helplessly.

"Oh, he'll *kill* him! Fanfan, my darling, come here! Oh! Oh!"

The battle was fierce, for even Puff, whose plebeian blood had roused the poodle's ire, had the remains of a certain currish courage in him, and was snapping, between his yelps, at his enemy's elegant legs, as he was chewed and mauled in the rapid descent.

"Puff, oh, *Puffy*! It is that nasty poodle! Let him go, sir! Drop him, I tell you!"

Mrs. Graves came rushing downstairs shrieking all but unintelligible insults at Fanfan, whose mistress listened in helpless wrath until Puff's champion seized an umbrella that lay on the hall-table and began belaboring the poodle's shorn back.

"I'll thank you to leave my dog alone, Mrs. Graves," snapped Mrs. Tillingham, "and my umbrella, too. Anyone would think that absurd dog was a baby!"

By this time, the cook, who was a valiant woman, had separated the combatants and each lady knelt by her pet, feeling him gingerly.

"Puff was asleep on my bed, Mrs. Tillingham," retorted Mrs. Graves, her nose white at the tip, "and your dog came in and attacked him. I'll thank you for keeping your dog out of my room! Poor Puff, did the horrid big dog bite you?"

Puff was covered with blood and looked more worn off than ever, while Fanfan's right eye had begun to swell alarmingly.

"So far as I know," continued Mrs. Graves, mopping up her darling's gore with her very large and substantial pocket-handkerchief, "Willie never invited that dog at all. He's a perfect nuisance in the house, anyhow."

Mrs. Tillingham had a sense of humor, and in spite of his eye, Fanfan had undoubtedly got the best of the battle.

"Did he invite—that?" she returned, nodding with a maddening smile at the other dog, "and if he did, why did he?" Before Mrs. Graves could answer, Molly came running downstairs laughing to herself.

"Dog-fight?" she asked, buttoning her glove. "I thought I heard a slight noise. Poor old Puff, did he bite great hunks out of you? *Fi donc*, Fanfan!"

"He nearly put Fanfan's eye out," answered her mother, putting on her jacket. "Margaret is going to bathe it and make a nice raw-beef poultice for it, aren't you, Margaret?"

The cook nodded and dragged the reluctant poodle away to the kitchen.

Mrs. Tillingham turned up her collar and looked at herself in the glass. "Good-bye, Mrs. Graves; I'm sure I hope Puff will soon be all right again. And—of course I bear you no malice about Fanfan's eye!"

A moment later the cook told the story, with marked relish, to the housemaid.

"Ready to clah each other's eyes out, they warr," she said, laughing. "Mrs. Graves was so mad she couldn't hardly speak, an' the other wan too. It's young Mrs. Sherman as'll have a place in paradise intirely, the way she gits on with all them old women. Hold still, you divil!"

#### IV

WILLIAM SHERMAN'S offices were as imposing as if they were the stronghold of a prince of oil or ice. Oak and dark green leather lent them an air of solid dignity, and the other rooms were filled with very smart young men who passed their days writing letters about buttons.

Sherman himself did not look as though his mission in life were to supply the world with those useful but rather insignificant little objects. He was very big and very broad and somewhat slow. There was something rather English in the expression of his face; it was not dull, and it was strong, but none of the American eagerness flickered over it. His grandfather had been a poor farmer in a stony state, until he took to buttons, and his father had been a plain man whose rough, honest face inclined many of the possessors of dapper progenitors to decide, when he visited his son at Harvard, that he was not a gentleman. Perhaps he was not; that is a very troublous question on this side the water, but Lucius Henry Sherman had been a good man and a clever one, and he had known enough to send his son to one of the greatest gentleman-factories in the country.

There was, in William Sherman,

in spite of his good education and his three years of European travel, a touch of something that is best expressed by the word *countrified*. The clothes he had on the afternoon of his wife's visit to his office were made in Bond street, but he wore no English look. He had none of that veneer of European manners that most young Americans acquire during a six-weeks' tour in the old country. And when he talked, his voice, while deep and agreeable, was American, as were his phrases. In a word, the man was genuine and simple, and had about him no spurious polish.

"Well, Molly! Good afternoon, Mrs. Tillingham; this is a pleasant surprise. Isn't it raining?"

"Pouring, Billy. I will go into the next room, if you don't mind, while Marie tells you why she came. And—don't laugh at her, sonny!"

Sherman did not laugh at his wife. "Of course you can get some new things, if you want 'em," he said promptly. "I suppose the house is old-fashioned. Only—don't hurt Mother Graves's feelings, dear."

"Oh, no, Billy. I am so sorry for her, poor thing. I'll be so careful. Now we'll go, for there isn't much time, and—thanks awfully, dear old boy. Come, mama!"

"I knew she would only have to ask, Billy," Mrs. Tillingham declared sweetly. "Fancy, I found her actually crying about it. Such a little goose!"

"You will go with her and help, will you not?" he asked. "I can't get away this afternoon."

"Oh, yes, you may trust me, dear boy. I know such a charming little shop!"

The little shop she spoke of is a charming little shop, there is no doubt about that. It is also a dear little shop. Mrs. Tillingham enjoyed her two hours there. She had a fund of superficial lore about furniture and *objets d'art* as she called them, and talked impressively of Louis Quinze, Louis Quatorze, Cinquecento, early

Dutch, Chippendale, Empire and Marqueterie. She was lightly learned in ivories, knowing—but usually wrong—about porcelain, and really did know something about ecclesiastical embroideries.

The man who showed them the things with something of the air of an Oriental potentate doing the honors of his treasures, enjoyed the visit almost as much as the two women did. He sold them a piece of wonderful Cingalese embroidery—yellow birds on a gray ground; three Persian rugs; an early Dutch *étagère* and *Capo di Monte* and old Sèvres cups and saucers to fill it; he sold them five chairs of different periods and countries; a Venetian wedding-chest, gilded and painted—they make them very well in Rochester—several tall engraved flower-glasses, a tortoiseshell table; a Vernis-Martin screen; two snuff-boxes and a miniature.

It was a profitable afternoon to young Mr. Santolli, and a delightful one to the two ladies.

On their way home they stopped at Hodgson's and bought four dozen American Beauty roses, and as there were no exactly suitable centerpieces for the table, a large silver basket was found at the nearest jeweler's, and Molly fell in love with some little menu cards and bought them as well.

Then, with sighs of relief and delight they returned home.

Mr. Santolli had already sent his minions, and the hall was full of hastily packed purchases.

"Them chairs and things, I sent upstairs, miss," one of the men volunteered to Molly. "The old lady didn't seem to like it much. Mr. Edward will be in soon." A few minutes later Mr. Edward—a younger edition of the Oriental potentate—arrived and the work began. Mr. Edward ordered the piano to be pulled forward, the fireplace to be hidden by the Vernis-Martin screen, the carpet to be concealed as much as possible by the rugs. Then with his own hand he placed the chairs, the *étagère* and the tables.

The effect was marvelous and Molly clapped her hands in delight.

"The curtains are bad, madame," Mr. Edward said as gently as he could, "and so are the walls—I should advise——"

"Yes, yes, we have just taken the house," answered Mrs. Tillingham, dusting a Sèvres saucer on her sleeve; "it must be done over entirely."

Molly laughed. She sometimes laughed at her mother's little airs which constituted an old joke with them.

"Billy may have *something* to say," she suggested slyly. Just then, while Mr. Edward was draping the Cingalese embroidery over the piano, Mrs. Sherman senior came in.

"For the land's sake!" she exclaimed. Mr. Edward turned and looked at her curiously.

"Why, Mayry, where did you get all these things? And where are Alvina's chairs?"

"Upstairs, Mrs. Sherman. I mean the chairs are. Billy let me get some new things to—just to brighten up the room a little, you know."

Mr. Edward, having accomplished his mission of bringing a certain amount of sweetness and light into this heathen land, departed noiselessly, and Mrs. Sherman, sinking into a Cinquecento chair, said faintly, "They must have cost a lot of money!"

Molly laughed. "They did. Wasn't it *dear* of Billy?"

"Was—was William with you?"

"No, Mrs. Sherman. Billy gave us *carte blanche*," answered Mrs. Tillingham with the sweetness of triumph. "He knew he could trust my taste."

The old woman looked around curiously. "Why, Mayry, those rugs must have cost an *awful* sight! William is making money, but he can't afford to be foolish, and the carpet was only a year old, too. How much did you spend, Mayry?"

Molly, who was filling the tall vases with roses, shook her head. "I don't know; mama kept count."

"Just short of two thousand dollars, Mrs. Sherman," answered Mrs. Tillingham.

Mrs. Sherman's face darkened, and she rose.

"Well, I shall *speak* to William," she said severely. "I never heard of such wicked extravagance in my life. The whole house could have been done over with less than that on Sixth avenue."

"I don't care for Sixth avenue," answered Mrs. Tillingham with an amused air. "Come, Marie, *ma chérie*, you must come up and rest; it is nearly seven."

## V

MAJOR WALSHINGHAM CARTER handed his hat and coat to the maid, smoothed his thin but exquisitely disposed hair, gave a last touch to his gardenia, and went into the transformed drawing-room.

Mrs. Tillingham had written him one of her own playful little notes, asking him to come a little early to dinner, and how could he know that she had forgotten the appointment and was at that moment tranquilly powdering her shoulders and arms with no thought of hurry?

One of the thoughtful woman's earliest purchases for her daughter had been two tall lamps with daffodil-colored shades, and in their subdued glow the gallant major saw a slight figure in black bending over a distant table.

"Well, you cruel little creature," he called softly, "here I am! What new torments have you—oh, I beg your pardon, madame. Upon my soul I do!"

No one who has not known Mrs. Graves can ever faintly conceive the feelings of a middle-aged man who has just by mistake called her a cruel little creature.

Walsingham Carter was a brave man, but his blood froze in his veins as Mrs. Graves turned her wan, bony face to him.

"There is some mistake," she said coldly.

"Certainly madame, certainly. The fact is, I—I thought you were my dear little friend and god-daughter, Molly Tillingham, and—I beg you to forgive me."

"Mrs. William Sherman will be down in a few minutes. Please take a chair."

"Thank you. Major Carter, madame—Walsingham Carter, who has the greatest pleasure in—ah—in making your acquaintance."

The major sat down, crossed his short legs and looked at his socks. It was awkward; devilish awkward. The mother-in-law, of course, looked as though she had been raised on saleratus biscuits and Methodist hymns. She was grim, but, after all she was a woman, and therefore to be conciliated.

"Charming house, this," began the little courtier pleasantly, "nicest quarter of the town; and then besides, the sunny side of the street. We Southerners do so love the sun!"

"Yes," assented Mrs. Graves, uninterestedly.

"I—I was here the other day to see my dear old friend—that is, not *old*, you know, but I've known her since she was a little sunny-haired child—Mrs. Tillingham."

"She must be about forty-five, I sh'd say."

The major shuddered. "Dear lady, no! Not a day over forty! And then, so lovely, so fascinating! H'm—as I was saying, I called the other day, and if I am not mistaken, you have, since then, made some slight changes in this delightful room?"

"Yes," returned Mrs. Graves with an ominous glare at the drapery on the piano.

"Quite right, quite right, madame! I feel sure I recognize your taste in the little cheerful air the room has gained. I say 'gained' because to my mind—"

The major faltered, for he had caught the expression in his companion's stony eye, and felt suddenly petrified.

"Put my damned old foot in it again,"

he observed mentally, and then, before he could recover himself, Mrs. Tillingham, a rosy vision in mauve, came rustling into the room with a little squeal of self-reproach.

"Oh, major, to think that I should have kept you waiting after purposely asking—"

"H'm, h'm!" thundered the major making a violent face at her, "how do you do, how do you do? How is Molly? How is—everybody? This lady and I have been having a most—a most charming little talk, Emily. Mrs. Sherman senior, I presume?"

While Mrs. Tillingham was explaining, the George Moberlys and Molly and Mrs. Sherman came in together and a few minutes later dinner was announced. There was clear soup; roast turkey with cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes and baked squash; salad; pumpkin-pie and vanilla ice-cream.

Mrs. Tillingham, who had attempted to dictate the menu to Mrs. Sherman, had been worsted by a word of her son-in-law's. "Better let mother order the dinner, Mother Tillingham—" and Mrs. Tillingham, unlike many otherwise clever people, knew when she was beaten.

So she contented herself by whispering to George Moberly, who sat by her, "Such a delicious New England country dinner. *Quite* too amusing!"

Moberly, a thin-faced, well-bred looking man, looked at her blankly. "I beg your pardon?" he asked aloud. If the dinner was queer, it was good, and both the major and Moberly enjoyed it.

"Thanks, sir—just a small bit, please," the major observed as Sherman brandished his knife over the remains of the turkey. "I haven't eaten anything so good for a long time."

Mrs. Sherman beamed at him. "Well, now, I like to hear that," she answered. "Mrs. Tillingham seemed to think you wouldn't like it, but I always think there's nothing like a good roast turkey. Mrs. Moberly, do have another piece!"

Mrs. Tillingham looked at the major,



but the major was helping himself to squash. The dinner did really amuse Mrs. Tillingham and yet no one would join her in her innocent mirth.

For a moment no one spoke, and then Mrs. Graves's plaintive voice dropped into the silence.

"Willie, do you recollect how Alvina used to love baked squash?"

His other mother-in-law almost tittered, but Sherman answered simply, "Yes. Squash and asparagus were always her favorite vegetables," and when Mrs. Moberly asked who Alvina was, he added without the least embarrassment, "My first wife; Mrs. Graves's daughter."

Moberly gave a quick glance, if not of definite reproof, at least of well-bred surprise, at Mrs. Tillingham's smile, and to cover her confusion that lady broke out hastily, "It's so funny to see Italians eating pumpkin-seeds as candy. They dry them and sell them in the street!"

"Do they, now?" exclaimed old Mrs. Sherman. "Why, Mr. Sherman liked 'em, too. Always had a couple in his vest-pocket."

Now Mrs. Tillingham's smile, though not the kindest in the world, was not essentially malicious, and as at this point she could no longer suppress it, she turned to Catherine Moberly, who was not always so rigidly polite as her husband.

But Catherine's eye was cold, and looking at Mrs. Sherman she said quietly, "My father liked pumpkin-seeds, too, Mrs. Sherman. You never knew my father, Emily!"

Emily's smile died a sudden death. No, she had never known the late Judge Buckner, for her husband, in marrying her, had married beneath him, and his uncle, Judge Buckner, had been one of those who had not called to extend the relationship to her.

William Sherman, looking on and listening, did not quite understand the meaning of the little scene, but his wife did.

"I have the dearest miniature of Billy's father, Cousin Catherine," she said distinctly. "I will show it to you.

Mrs. Sherman gave it to me. He had such a dear, good face."

Her mother reddened, for Molly's kindly tact had before this come into use as a shield against her sharp little arrows.

Catherine Moberly, who had always detested Mrs. Tillingham, smiled approval at the little bride. Molly was surprisingly like poor Fred, at times.

And the major, who had been more or less in love with Emily Tillingham, more or less all his life, stirred uneasily in his chair, and then, with an effort led the conversation into some safe and general channel.

While the pumpkin-pie was being eaten, Mrs. Moberly asked Mrs. Sherman for the recipe, and Sherman exclaimed, with his big, boyish laugh, "Good! mother made that pie herself, didn't you, mother? She always was famous for her pies and the recipe for that one is a family secret. The only one we've got!"

His mother smiled at him. "I don't know but what I sh'll have to give it to Mrs. Moberly anyway, William," she said. "Do take another piece, Mr. Moberly."

And Moberly did so.

After dinner Molly, who was a little flushed, drew her mother aside and whispered to her, "Oh, mama, *please* don't be grand."

"Grand? What perfect nonsense, Molly Tillingham!"

"Well—I only mean don't put on airs to Mrs. Sherman. She is a perfect dear, and I'm sure Cousin Catherine thinks so too."

Mrs. Tillingham bridled. "Catherine Buckner would do that just to spite me," she returned crossly. "*She* is grand, if you like."

Molly said no more, but she knew that some people are grand because they are *not* grand, while some are not grand because they are grand.

"Will you drink a glass of Curacao with me, madame?" The major enjoyed his own old-fashioned manners, as many well-preserved, not quite old dandies do. He liked himself as

he bent smilingly towards the lady he meant to honor; he liked his ultra-courtly smile; the flexible bend in his back.

Mrs. Graves looked at him. "I never drink stimulants," she said coldly, and at the words all the mischief that was in the major rose up and tempted him.

"Curacao is not a stimulant, Mrs. Graves," he returned. He set one glass down on the table near her, and then, touching his lips with his own, made her the most splendid bow she had ever seen in her life.

Mrs. Graves moved her long nose slightly, as does a rabbit in examining a new kind of leaf.

"I've never tasted this—this stuff," she said, hesitatingly. "It's one of Mrs. Tillingham's ideas—but Merry called it liquor."

"Then she was wrong. Whisky is liquor, and brandy, but Curacao is,—h'm! a delicious concoction of herbs. Can I not persuade you to try it?"

Mrs. Graves was flat as to figure and unattractive in face, but she was, after all, a woman, and the major's eye was very coaxing, the major's voice warm with interest.

"Well, I'm a teetotaller, but it smells good, and as you say it isn't spirits, I might as well try—"

Taking up her glass she nipped at it, still rabbit-like, and then slowly drained it.

"I declare I should never have thought there was spirits in it," she announced, her eyes full of tears. "Rather like surrup, isn't it?"

The major bit his lip fiercely and pulled at his mustache. He knew he had behaved outrageously, but he believed that he could not help it. A useful belief. Before he could speak Fanfan came tripping up to him, and sitting up, waved a braceleted paw in a way that meant sugar.

"I hate that dog," announced Mrs. Graves, suddenly confidential, a faint flush in her thin cheeks. "He looks like the Evil One."

"He does. There is really something Satanic in his eye."

"He ate one of my dear dead daughter's knitted slippers the other day. I keep 'em in my room, full of camphor balls, and that brute came and chewed one all up!"

"Didn't—didn't the camphor balls hurt him?" gasped the now purple major, turning to signal for help to Mrs. Tillingham.

"No. *Nothing* hurts him. And when he'd torn it all to pieces, he sat and—grinned at me. He—I just hate him!"

"Now major!" Mrs. Tillingham had come to the rescue, and stood shaking her finger at him, and coquettishly exaggerating her Southern accent as she did when she wished to be peculiarly attractive, "this flirtation is becoming positively scan'lous! Mrs. Graves, the major is an old friend of mine, and Ah won't have you breaking his heart!"

Mrs. Graves, after the herbaceous beverage, was feeling unusually kind and mild, but this was too much for her.

"Really, Mrs. Tillingham," she returned severely, "I wonder at you! A woman of your age, too!"

Then she walked off, and the major and his friend gave way to not altogether silent mirth.

"What have you been saying to her, you dreadful man?" asked Mrs. Tillingham.

"Nothing, I swear! We were talking about Fanfan! My dear Emily, how can you stand living with her? Well, when are we to have that little lunch at François's?"

"You are an abandoned wretch to try to persuade me to do such wicked things! 'A woman of my age!'"

"Emily," answered the major, seriously, "you are just twenty. François's?"

An hour or so after the departure of the guests, Mrs. Sherman knocked at her son's door.

"William, can I come in?"

"Why, certainly, mother." William was taking off his coat as she

entered, and he did not put it on again, but he was very cordial and gave her a chair and stroked the almost hairless place that her innocent front covered by day.

"Mayry with her mother?"

"Yes. She—she had something to tell her, I believe. Now tell me why you haven't begun on your beauty sleep?"

The old woman smiled, a little anxiously. "I guess my beauty sleep can wait, William. I came because I couldn't go to bed till I had spoken my mind out. Mrs. Tillingham told me that those things cost an awful sight of money, William."

Sherman, who was taking off his collar, turned. "What things? Oh, the furniture. Well, yes. You see, the old things did look kind of old-fashioned, and—Molly is young."

"Her mother isn't," retorted Mrs. Sherman, with something almost like venom in her voice.

He only stared. "Isn't what?"

"Young. *She* ought to know better, if Mayry doesn't. *She* picked out all the outlandish things that aren't even pretty looking, to my mind—not Mayry. The poor child told me so herself! She is so proud of her mother's good taste, as she calls it."

Sherman sat down. "Well, if Molly's pleased, mother, I am. Besides, I think the room looks much better now. Don't you?"

His mother's lips narrowed. "No, William, I don't, but that's neither here nor there. It's your house, and if your wife likes to litter it up with trash, I've no call to interfere, though I can embroider better myself than that thing on the piano. Only I do feel it to be my duty to tell you that I don't think you ought to lay out nearly two thousand dollars on one room. And if I were you I shouldn't allow Mrs. Tillingham to spend my money."

Sherman was surprised by her vehemence, but he knew her strong spirit of economy, relic of narrower days, and could understand her resent-

ing Mrs. Tillingham's lavish expenditure.

"Well, well," he said soothingly, "I guess you're about right, mother, and I'll speak to Molly about it. I don't think she is exactly extravagant, either, but—they used to be poor, and of course she wants the house to look pretty."

"Mayry is a dear child," returned the old woman, somewhat softened by his words, "and I could teach her how to save, if her mother wasn't always at her elbow. Why, William, those gilt finger-bowls cost four dollars apiece, and there isn't a nick or a crack in the old ones!"

"She asked me about the finger-bowls, the old ones; poor Alvina's really *are* hideous, too!"

Mrs. Sherman pursed her lips.

"Oh, well, just's you think, of course. I am not for keeping on all of Alvina's things. I never cared much for her taste, but—well, good night, William," she wound up hastily, rising as Molly came in a trifle flushed. "Good night, Mayry, my dear. You looked as sweet as a peach, and I'm glad you said that about Mr. Sherman's miniature."

Kissing her daughter-in-law and nodding to her son, the old woman withdrew.

"Well, what did your mother want?" asked Sherman, as the door closed.

Molly gave a little nervous laugh. "What did *yours* want?" she returned.

"Well, mother thought—and I agree with her, dear—that two thousand dollars is a good deal of money to put into one room. There are ten rooms in this house!"

"So *that* was it. I knew something was wrong! All right, Billy, I agree too. It was silly, only I didn't count up as we went along. *Can't*, you know! It seemed so easy to buy that I never thought of the paying. I'll tell your mother tomorrow. Billy, how sweet she looked, and what a dear she is. Cousin Catherine just loved her!"

He smiled, well pleased. "I knew you'd get on with mother."

But Molly's mind had flown away to a less pleasant subject.

"Look here, Billy, couldn't you ask

Mrs. Graves not to be so rude to mama? She said abominable things to her tonight, before everybody."

"Oh, come! I don't believe Mother Graves was really rude. She's very kind-hearted, you know."

"Not to mama," persisted Molly, unexpectedly. "Ever since we came she has been—saying things to mama. Tonight mama made some little joking remark to her about the major, and Mrs. Graves was *horrid*—spoke of mama's age, and you *know* she doesn't like that!" In spite of herself, Molly gave a little giggle as she spoke.

"Well, Fanfan nearly killed poor old Puff this afternoon, and Mother Graves may have been feeling a little sore. She's a very good woman, Molly, and, you know, very unhappy."

"I know, Billy, and I am dreadfully sorry for her. But she ought not to hate poor mama because Alvina is dead and I am alive—why, she actually seems to grudge mama her daughter."

Sherman sighed. "Poor soul. I'll speak to her about it—if I can without hurting her feelings. I say, Molly, what about the chairs?"

"Oh, yes, that's another thing. I went up to her room before dinner and explained to her as—as gently as I could that we had so many new things for the drawing-room that there was hardly room for the old chairs. And I asked her, *very* nicely, Billy, if she wouldn't like them in her room."

"Well, what did she say?"

"She said—that as I never sewed I could not judge of their beauty. Oh, Billy! And she said that they were *yours*, that Alvina had worked them as a present for you, and that you must decide what is to become of them."

Sherman rubbed his hands thoughtfully. "What do you think I *had* better do with them?" he asked.

## VI

THE next day as Sherman sat at his desk in his office, Mrs. Graves came in. Her mourning always looked, in some subtle way, blacker than the mourning

of other people, and that morning her long nose looked sadder than ever, and her eyes were swollen and red. Sherman treated her kindly, and when she had sat down and opened a black plush bag which once, in its youth, had been crimson, and Alvina's, she took out her handkerchief and began to speak.

"I s'pose you're busy," she said, wiping her eyes, "but I just had to come. Willie, do you know what day it is today?"

"November the twenty-sixth," he answered. "Of course I know, Mother Graves."

"Your wedding-day. Your and poor Alvina's wedding-day."

He nodded. "Yes. I have been thinking about it."

"It's raining, too. It always does rain on November the twenty-sixth. Least-ways it usually does. Do you remember how it poured that day? I never knew it meant bad luck. Oh, Willie, Willie, what a loss she is to you!"

Sherman nodded again. His position was a slightly awkward one.

"Do you remember how lovely she looked in her white veil, and how becoming frizzes were to her? And how she cried when she left me?"

Yes, he remembered. Alvina had been a very tearful woman. And her nose used to get red just as her mother's was now. Alvina had looked like her mother, although at twenty he had thought her pretty.

"And do you remember what a good housekeeper she was?" went on the poor woman, "how good her bread was, and her jellies? and how beautifully she sang in church? I never heard such a high voice anywhere. You could hear her above all the rest."

"It was certainly a surprisingly high voice," he said. He did not realize, this unanalytical, non-introspective man, how much he had outgrown the people and things of his early youth. His father had been a button-maker, he himself was a button-maker, and he had never found the difference there was in kind between them.

Alvina Graves had been his first love. They had become engaged when they

were both eighteen; he had married her a few days after his graduation from Harvard; he had been fond of her and good to her; he had missed and mourned her when she died, and even now he did not know how great a blessing her death had been to him. But Molly was his heart's delight. He was proud of her, and of himself for having won her, and it was hard on him now, in his great happiness and prosperity, to be called on to lament the loss of her predecessor.

Leaning over he patted Mrs. Graves's hand kindly.

"Come, Mother Graves, don't cry so," he said; "it was God's will, you know."

But Mrs. Graves had come to weep, and weep she would.

"When she was working those chairs she said to me, 'Mother, I hope I can live to finish the set.' And she couldn't. She had to die, and now—the chairs aren't good enough for your second wife!"

Sherman waited silently until her loud sobs subsided. Then he said, looking at his watch:

"You must remember, Mother Graves, that fashions in chairs change as they do in everything else. I think Alvina's lovely, and I'm going to have 'em in my 'den,' as Molly calls it. They will look very well with father's desk, and I'm sure I shall enjoy them very much. Now dry your eyes and we'll go across the street and have some lunch. It's too late for you to get uptown in time, and I'll telephone Molly."

Mrs. Graves shook her head forlornly. "I couldn't eat a bite today, Willie," she answered, "but I'll go and sit with you to keep you company."

The major looked older by daylight, as so many of us, alas, do, but he was alert and well-dressed, and conducted his companion to the table he had engaged with such a graceful little air of deferential adoration that she was as proud of him as he was of her. He even impressed the great François himself, as that dignitary stood by the door looking almost as much like the great Napoleon as he tried to!

"Eggs first, dear lady?" asked the major, as Mrs. Tillingham unfastened her boa and leaned back in her chair—her back being to the light, of course, for the major was a wise man. "Eggs, and then birds, and nice little cutlets in paper collars?"

"Oh, yes. Eggs with parmesan, and birds and salad—I warn you, majoh, I have a *jaim de loupl*!"

The major protested gallantly and sent for François.

"Well, François, I want the very nicest little luncheon you can possibly serve! This lady has lived in Paris!"

Bows and admiration from Napoleon, a short but animated discussion, and the waiter departed while Mrs. Tillingham protested over the reckless additions made to the original programme.

"Broiled oysters on toast! and potatoes! and *bombes glacées* and liqueurs! and champagne! When you know how much I prefer a *petit vin blanc*, or a drop of Chianti!"

But the major had ordered a quart of Clicquot, and *not* extra dry.

For the gourmet, François's is a Happy Land where hot plates are hot, and cold plates cold; where claret is neither chilly nor warm; where sauces differ from one another not only in name but in taste; where a salad is a mystery of delirious suggestions that flee when one attempts to pin them down to flavors; where ordinary *poulet* is an etherealized bird, and canvas-backs too good for anyone but a poet. And on this rainy morning the place was, as usual, full. Yellow-haired ladies sat back to back with pallid art-students without stays. A great president of Trusts jostled a little French monologist as he took his place. By one window sat the world's greatest soprano, at the next table a fashionable Presbyterian minister and his wife.

All the world and his wife, or his friend, was there. Mrs. Tillingham, who was looking her best, leaned across the table to the major and as she talked to him forgot that she was no longer so young as she used to be.



"It's just a habit, major," she was saying, "and it grows on you!"

"Don't call me major. Call me Walsingham!"

"Oh, oh!"

Mrs. Tillingham's chiffon veil, thrown back over her smart green hat, quivered with coy surprise.

"I'm suah I never called you—Walsingham—in ma life!" she cried, *very* Southern in accent.

"The more reason why you should begin now. Emily—say it again!"

But she turned from him as the waiter whisked away the plates and set down coffee in their place, and putting up her lorgnon, studied her neighbors with a certain calm insolence she especially admired in herself.

"Cigarettes, monsieur?"

The major had drunk a good deal of champagne and was feeling young and modern.

"Well, well," he returned, carelessly. "You'll have one, Emily? You *know* you like them."

"Oh, *fi donc!* How can you? But—well, I don't know—lots of ladies seem to be smoking, and one gets *so* used to it in Europe. The dear duchess always does. Yes—Walsingham—I will!"

The enchanted major held a match for her and looked into her eyes as she puffed at it. Who says fifty-four isn't young?

"Waiter—doo! *Chartrooses vertes!*"

"Oh," cried Mrs. Tillingham, coquetting with her cigarette, "will you ever forget Mrs. Graves—"

As she finished, her cigarette wavered and fell from her stiffened fingers, and her face paled and became fixed with horror.

"Emily," gasped the major, "you are ill, you are not well! Tell me what it is! Oh, my darling!"

"Shut up, you fool," returned Emily, sharply. "Mrs. Graves and Billy are there, looking at us!"

At this point the waiter pounced on the forgotten cigarette which was slyly burning a hole in the table-cloth, and laying it on a saucer, presented it to Mrs. Tillingham. This action recalled that doughty lady to herself.

"Such a sharp pain near my heart," she murmured, vainly trying to relight the cigarette. "Why *shouldn't* I smoke if I choose?"

Mrs. Graves, who was standing as if turned to stone, sank into the just vacated chair at the next table.

"Well, the lan' sakes!" she gasped. "This beats everything I ever saw!"

"Another cigarette, please, major! Ah, Mrs. Graves! Howdy, Billy! Are you shocked at my smoking? Everyone does abroad, you know. I advise you to have some Curacoa, Mrs. Graves. I'm ready, major."

Sherman, who was in truth rather shocked at finding his wife's mother indulging in a *tête-à-tête* luncheon with a man, bowed in embarrassed silence.

Not so Mrs. Graves.

"Champagne too! Well, I *must* say!"

The wretched major had succeeded in crushing his guest's sleeves into her smart coat and had got his own hat and coat.

Mrs. Tillingham laughed sweetly. "I wouldn't *try* to express my feelings, Mrs. Graves," she said; "it might be dangerous. *Au revoir*. Come along, major."

When Sherman came home that night he found Molly waiting for him. Indeed, she heard his step in the vestibule and opened the door for him, her face dimpled with laughter. "Oh, Billy, I've been *bursting* for you to come! It has been too funny for words!"

"Funny! Well, this is a relief. I couldn't make Mother Graves see it in that light at all. It was—pretty bad in the restaurant, dear. Where are they?"

Molly led him in mysterious silence to his den, and closing the door danced about the room, clapping her hands in a frenzy of childish glee.

"Well, sit down and warm yourself and I'll tell you. They're in a state of siege, Billy. Siege!"

"Who are?"

"Why, Mrs. Graves and mama! Mama didn't mind a bit about the restaurant—she wasn't doing anything wrong,

you know, and besides she's so good-tempered! She came home at about four, and was sitting with me, telling me all about it, when Mrs. Graves came in. Oh, Billy, Billy, it was so funny! She came in like a—like a Sibyl, and after staring at us for ages, she said—I'll give you three guesses what she said!"

Sherman shook his head. "I never can guess things; go on."

"Well, she said, 'Woman, you have disgraced my son!'"

"O Lord!"

"Yes. And of course mama said, 'I didn't know you had a son!' Then Mrs. Graves went on, 'William Sherman is my son in the eyes of God.'"

"Mama: 'Well, he's mine in the eyes of the Law!'"

"Mrs. Graves: 'Have you no shame?'"

"Mama: 'Certainly not!'"

"Oh, Billy, then Mrs. Graves sat down and told mama that she was wicked. She meant it, but we couldn't help laughing! Mama was as nice as she could be, but Mrs. Graves got worse and worse and at last she said that mama was a sheep dressed like a lamb! And then mama said—oh, well, one of her funny little sharp speeches, and Mrs. Graves said it was an insult to Alvina's memory to have mama living in the house."

Molly's face was grave for a moment, and Sherman shook his head. "That was bad. What did your mother say?"

"Mama was furious, of course, but she laughed and said something about my allowing Mrs. Graves to live here—then they both left the room, and are locked up in their own rooms now. Mama wants to speak to you. It was awful at the end, but so funny at first, and your mother and I have been trotting in and out trying to make peace, and failing—and all about mama's lunching with the major!"

Sherman was silent. He remembered the champagne and the cigarette, but he did not mention them.

After a pause, the maid knocked at the door, and announced that Mrs. Graves would like to see Mr. Sherman in her room.

"All right, Jennie, I'll come at once," he answered with a frown of perplexity. "I'm so sorry this has happened, Molly dear."

"So am I, but it will blow over. Poor Mrs. Graves was horrible, but then—" she bit her lip suddenly, for she could hardly tell her husband that his first wife's mother knew no better!

Sherman went upstairs and knocked at Mrs. Graves's door. "It's I, Mother Graves. May I come in?"

The key turned noisily, and he was admitted.

Mrs. Graves, dressed as she had been when he parted from her after the ill-starred luncheon, motioned him to a chair and then burst into tears.

"I have been—insulted—trampled upon—by that woman, Willie, by that brazen hussy!"

"Oh, come, come, don't exaggerate!"

"It's true. She is a hussy. Flirting around with men and smoking. Oh, if Alvina could know!"

"Molly has been telling me about it, and—you seem to have said pretty hard things to her, too."

"I did! I'm a respectable old woman and wear respectable black clothes and there are some things I can't stand. I feel that it is an insult to my girl's memory to have such a woman using her things!"

"Using her things?"

"Yes. The soup-plates she drinks her soup out of—when she isn't gallivanting with majors—were Alvina's. And the hat-rack where she hangs up her gaudy hats, and the bath-room rug, and the parlor curtains! It will break my heart, Willie, it will break my heart!"

"Well, but, Mother Graves," answered Sherman, gently, looking at a ghastly 'oil portrait' of his first wife done from memory, after her death, "you must remember that the soup-spoons are Molly's, and the dining-table, and the upstairs carpets—and you get the use of them."

Mrs. Graves mopped at her eyes with fierce energy.

"I'll never touch the soup-spoons

again, then, and I'll thank her to let the soup-plates alone!"

A wild vision of Mrs. Tillingham drinking her future soup out of coffee-cups and Mrs. Graves drinking hers out of Alvina's plates flew across Sherman's mind and nearly upset his gravity, but another look at his companion steadied it.

"You and Mrs. Tillingham do not understand each other," he said; "that is the whole trouble. She would not hurt your feelings for worlds, I am sure, and you would not hurt hers if you knew how kind she really is! She speaks so sympathetically of—your great loss."

"Yes, and her big strong daughter alive and well! I'm sure I don't see how anyone who knew Alvina could ever look at Merry—oh, I didn't mean to say that to *you*, Willie! I like Merry, she's a nice girl——"

The poor woman looked nervously at him and twisted her bony hands together.

"I know, I know, Mother Graves."

"If she goes, Willie, I'll be good to Merry, indeed I will. I'll try to teach her Alvina's way of making those stuffed roses in embroidery, and for pickling beef. And I've got a book of Alvina's songs, with her name written in it—I'll give it to Merry. I don't know but what she'll learn to be more like Alvina in time——"

Sherman rose. "Dear Mother Graves," he said, his big face very tender, "you and Molly will learn to be great friends and that will make me very happy. But—I cannot send Mrs. Tillingham away. Molly asked her to live with us, and she has no home——"

"But she doesn't seem to belong to—us, at all, Willie. I can't imagine her in New Shakespeare, and I can't *think* what Mrs. Deacon Saltonstall would say to her!"

"I know. But—this is New York. Now don't think about it any more. She's different from mother and you. But she's a Southerner and had a different upbringing and—the greatest of these is Charity."

Mrs. Graves was weeping again and

did not answer, so he left the room in silence. Mrs. Graves was a depressing woman, who in no way contributed to what Molly called "the general joy," but Sherman no more contemplated getting rid of her than he would have contemplated lopping off an occasionally rheumatic arm. And he was so sorry for her that his big heart ached as he went down the corridor to his other mother-in-law's room.

Mrs. Tillingham, in a soft gray dressing-gown, a bit of old lace thrown over the presumed disorder of her hair, sat by the fire reading.

"Well, Billy," she said gaily, as he entered, "how is the poor thing?"

This mode of address rather puzzled Sherman, but he had been, metaphorically, drenched in tears all day, and sighed with relief as he sat down.

"I'm so sorry for her," went on Molly's mother, rummaging in a box for a bit of chocolate, "and I kept my temper as long as I could—well, she *was* rather trying at the last!"

"Yes, Molly told me."

"*Pauvre petite Marie!* She was so funny—amused and distressed at one time. Frankly, I am sorry Mrs. Graves happened in at François's—for of course any woman of the world would have understood my being there with the dear old major; she, equally of course, could not. And I like to conform to the ways of the people I am with. 'When in Rome,' you know. Will you have a cigarette?"

Very gracefully she herself lit one and puffed at it with half-shut eyes. She was clever, the little widow, and had grasped the fact that while, as a matter of fact she had smoked at François's chiefly by way of being daring and fascinating, it would be better to make Sherman believe her a victim of a polite European habit.

"These are rather good—Russian. Princess Ourokoff always keeps me provided." (She had bought them in a Broadway shop on her way uptown.)

Sherman was silent for a moment. He disapproved of women smoking, but he knew that it was done in Europe, and, when all was said and done, he

knew that his mother-in-law had lived abroad for the greater part of the last ten years.

"She is—old-fashioned," he began, at length.

Mrs. Tillingham smiled kindly. "Oh, yes, I know, of course. I hope I know the world well enough to make *every* allowance for her, poor woman. I sha'n't even insist on her begging my pardon, though for a while I thought I should have to!"

"That is—very good of you. And I think wise, too. Things blow over if they're not too much talked about. You see, she was hurt about the chairs, in the first place——"

"Oh, yes, the chairs. I was *so* sorry about them! How much nicer it would have been for her to have had a nice little house in New Shakespeare, where she is really at home, with all poor Alvina's things in it!"

Sherman rose. "Oh, no, she wouldn't like to live apart from me and—things will settle down all right in a little while, I am sure."

When he had gone, Mrs. Tillingham threw her cigarette into the fire with a wry face, and ate some chocolates. She hated the taste of tobacco.

## VII

THINGS did settle down as things do, and busy, unobservant William Sherman believed that all his domestic troubles were behind him. Mrs. Graves and Mrs. Tillingham addressed each other politely and condescended each to the use of the possessions of the daughter of the other.

Alvina's chairs, stiffly arranged against the crimson walls of Sherman's den, helped in their way to keep the peace, and Molly's sweet nature acted as buffer to the occasional threatenings of clash that occurred in the household.

By the time Christmas drew near the young Shermans were going out a good deal in a quiet way. Sherman's business friends had prosperous wives and pretty daughters, and were givers of dinners, and even balls, although they

figured not in the society notes of smart journals. One or two Southern families, friends of the Moberlys, had called, and through them the young people were caught up among the lower clouds that veil Olympus.

And society meaning clothes, Molly and Mrs. Tillingham found it expedient to hie them to a famous dressmaker of the second flight, and lay in a stock of pretty garments of all kinds for the bride. Mrs. Tillingham possessed that knack of taste that so frequently surprises great French dressmaking artists in Americans, and her instinct as to what would be the most becoming to Molly for every occasion, was unerring.

One evening in mid-December Molly came out of her room dressed for the most important ball to which she had yet gone.

A cousin of George Moberly's was taking her and Billy, and had bidden her put on all her war-paint.

Mrs. Sherman and Mrs. Tillingham were in the parlor, as the old lady called it, waiting for her to come down. Mrs. Graves, it being a Wednesday, had gone to a prayer-meeting. Molly ran downstairs wrapped in a long, white-velvet coat with a broad sable collar, and as she entered the drawing-room, slipped out of the sleeves and stood, to her mother-in-law's eyes, nearly naked, in the doorway.

The frock was pale pink, and covered with delicate old lace, like frost-work. There were no sleeves at all, nothing but narrow flesh-colored bands that clung close to her smooth young shoulders and did not break the line at all. It was a beautiful frock and made of pretty Molly a beautiful young woman. Back and front it was as low as ever a frock ought to be, but no lower. In her soft hair Molly wore a low circlet of diamonds, and across the front of the corsage a corresponding spray of the same stones. Mrs. Tillingham was about to break into an exclamation of delight when Mrs. Sherman forestalled.

"Mayry Sherman," said the old woman sternly, "go upstairs and put on some clothes!"

It was the first time she had ever spoken unkindly to Molly, who could hardly believe her ears until her eyes, turning and seeing the good old face almost distorted by anger, confirmed them.

"Go upstairs and put on some clothes!"

"Why, Mrs. Sherman——"

"Go, I say. I blush that even we two women should see you dressed like—like an Oriental dancer!"

She was so much in earnest that even the flight of her imagination was not ridiculous.

"Mrs. Sherman, you must be out of your mind," broke in Mrs. Tillingham, getting back the use of her tongue; "how dare you speak so?"

The old woman rose with homely majesty, her knitting-work, as she called it, falling unheeded to her feet.

"I dare a good deal, Mrs. Tillingham, for my son. I have been a coward before, for I couldn't bear to hurt his feelings. I didn't say a word when she went to the Clarks's in that white dress, nor when she went to the opera in that black one. But *they* had sleeves, at least. This is—too much. It is simply indecent!"

Molly looked down at herself and then came a few steps nearer. "Perhaps you can't see the shoulder-straps," she said, politely enough.

Mrs. Sherman frowned. "Shoulder-straps! the very name is outrageous. Straps cover no nakedness."

At this juncture the bell rang, and as Mrs. Eustace Moberly's footman announced that his mistress was waiting in the carriage, Sherman came running down the stairs.

"Ready, dear? The carriage is here. Why, what is the matter?" Mrs. Tillingham laid her arm on his hand before his mother could speak.

"Nothing, Billy," she said, compelling his attention. "Molly, button your coat; it is cold. The footman is in the hall!"

Molly hurried from the room followed by her husband, and the two mothers-in-law were alone.

Mrs. Sherman's language was cer-

tainly offensive, and as certainly Biblical. Once roused, and thoroughly convinced of the justice of her cause, the old woman did not mince matters.

Mrs. Tillingham listened until she ceased speaking, and then, as thoroughly convinced of the righteousness of her own opinion, expressed it. "——and you cannot expect my daughter, a woman of the world, to dress for a ball as if she were going to a husking-bee in—New Shakespeare," she finished.

This war waged for three days. The strongest nature of the four women in the house, Mrs. Sherman could not and would not retract what she had said, and the more she said the bitterer grew her words. She possessed a sort of rough eloquence that not even Mrs. Tillingham's neat little poisoned arrows could oppress, and after a few tilts at her, Mrs. Tillingham and Molly withdrew from the field and watched the combat between Sherman and his mother.

For he took Molly's part from the first. The frock had been not a whit lower than the majority worn at the ball, and was much higher than some! He was inexperienced in such matters, but he loved his wife and his old-fashioned eyes would have been prompt to notice any suggestion of "fastness" in her costume. This he repeated over and over to his mother, whom he could not remember ever to have seen so angry.

"If I like the dress, I guess you ought to be satisfied," was his formula.

And her answer was, "Your eyes are blinded, and mine are clear."

Sherman, big, cool fellow though he was, was at his wits' end. He saw that his mother believed his wife's very soul to be in danger because of the clothes she wore, and the old woman was too fond of Molly not to suffer keen pain in her belief. She herself had once had a daughter, who, had she lived, would now have been about Molly's age.

"If Susy was alive, William," Mrs. Sherman told him, "I could not allow her to visit your wife. Think of how terrible it is!"



"Susy could not have been better than Molly, mother," was his prompt reply, but her argument hurt him, nevertheless.

Molly, herself, too kind not to feel sorry for the old woman who was making everyone so miserable through her loyalty to her principles, would have promised never to wear the offending garment again, but her husband forbade her doing this.

"She must learn that she has been wrong," he said, "or there will never be peace."

So Molly sat silent under the passionate addresses of her mother-in-law, waiting, as lay in her hopeful nature, for it to "blow over."

Mrs. Tillingham, after being worsted in her two attempts at convincing Mrs. Sherman of the utter folly of her opinions, went to East Orange for a few days to everybody's relief. And greatly to Molly's surprise, Mrs. Graves took up arms on her behalf and did battle for her.

"I'm not saying I like these new-fangled clothes. Julia," she said, the minute Mrs. Tillingham's cab had driven away. "I like modesty as well as anyone, and I can't imagine that Alvina'd ever have worn clothes like Merry's. But what I *do* say is that Merry is a pure-minded woman, and if she feels comfortable in her mind with so little on, and that if Willie is satisfied to have her going about looking like a heathen statue, you and I ought to be contented."

"I guess I know my daughter-in-law as well as you do, Ellen Graves," retorted the not unnaturally aggrieved Mrs. Sherman, "and I don't need *you* to tell me she's pure-minded. But it isn't good for any Christian woman to wear such clothes. And Mayry ought to make a stand against it. She's young and she doesn't know how wicked the world is, but *you* do, and I don't know's I'll ever get over your taking up these modern lax opinions at your age!"

"I'll thank you not to call me lax!"

Molly, who had crept unseen into the room in search of a book, withdrew in silence, shaking with rueful laughter.

The two old women had been friends for fifty years, and now here they were, facing each other with angry eyes, saying bitter things to each other all because of her clothes!

It was absurd, but it was very pathetic, and when Billy came home that evening she instigated him to an attempt at peace-making that came to a bad end. Mrs. Graves was, of course, tearful, and made frequent references to poor Alvina, but she was ready to beg her old friend's pardon if that friend would withdraw that unlucky word *lax*. No word in the language could, as applied to her opinions, have more sharply hurt her pride.

But Mrs. Sherman, proud and angry, deserted, as she felt, by all her natural allies, facing the whole world in defence of her principles, would withdraw nothing. Molly was utterly amazed at the pertinacity with which the usually so gentle old woman refused to give way in a single point.

"I said *lax* and I meant *lax*," she insisted. "I am *ashamed* of her! And I wonder what every one in New Shakespeare would say to her opinions."

This reference nearly broke Mrs. Graves's heart, and Molly tried in vain to comfort her.

A few evenings later the young Sher-mans were invited to the opera, and the question arose in the privacy of their room of what Molly should wear.

"I might wear a high dress—I *have* got a cold," the young woman suggested, hesitatingly, "but it will make me so conspicuous!"

Sherman stood by the dressing-table in his shirtsleeves, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. Molly thought that he looked, at that moment, very like his mother.

"No," he said at length, "you've got to dress as other women do. Wear that pretty blue thing that you wore to the Elverson's."

"All right. Only, Billy—I am so dreadfully sorry for your mother; she's getting quite thin!"

"I know, but it can't be helped. She's very masterful, mother is—but she must learn that—well—to mind her own business."

The roughness of the words, and the little set of the firm jaw as he ceased speaking, gave his wife a little shock.

They were all so *strong*, these New Englanders!

"Billy," she said, after a pause, "you know that I love your mother very much. It doesn't even make me angry when she is so cross about my clothes—and I should miss her awfully if she were not here. But as everything seems to—to rub her the wrong way so—wouldn't it be better, perhaps, if she—didn't live with us?"

Sherman turned and looked at his wife sharply. "Who put that idea into your head?" he asked.

"No one. Why? I only meant that she seems to be too old-fashioned to be happy with us——"

His face cleared, for he saw the truth in her eyes, and he remembered the sweet patience with which she had met his mother's angry speeches.

"No, dear. My mother lives with me," he said gravely. "And she must give way in some things, and we in others. There is a middle ground where we can meet."

Molly kissed him.

"I'm sure there is, and I do love her! Only—I hope she'll begin to come towards it pretty soon!"

When they went downstairs Mrs. Sherman came out into the passage.

"I tell you, William," she began passionately, "that the Lord will punish you if you encourage her to go out like that——"

Sherman stopped, and put his hands on her shoulders.

"Mother," he said, "I forbid you ever to mention the subject again. I can guard my own honor, and I am the only person who could, come what might. So—never let me hear you speak again on the matter."

For a moment this stern man, who had always been her tender son, and yet who seemed so much more like her dead husband, looked into her frightened old eyes. Then, bending, he kissed her and passed on, followed by his wife, to the waiting carriage.

She never approached the subject

again, meeting Molly the next morning with a half-frightened kiss that was warmly returned, and hardly daring to lift her eyes to Sherman's, until in asking for coffee, he called her "mammy," as he had called her when he was a child.

Mrs. Tillingham, after a very pleasant little visit in East Orange, returned to find peace in her dwelling-place and, to do her justice, she avoided to the best of her ability anything that might lead to the departure of that dove-hued angel.

The major was allowed to come to see her only once a fortnight, and when she met him outside she was scrupulously careful not to mention it. As a matter of fact, this half-clandestine sort of communication possessed great charm for the lively lady and her adorer. It made them, they thought, better appreciate the feelings of the youthful Capulet and Montague, this being sentenced to pine in separation by the hard hearts of the Sherman household.

"Every time I go out of the house Mrs. Graves looks at me as if she suspected I were going to rob a church!" Emily told her Walsingham.

And Walsingham, on once meeting Mrs. Graves at the corner, where a scented note had bidden him cool his eager heels until his Emily could fly to him, nearly fell in a fit.

"I felt, by Jove, as if I was after her ewe-lamb," he told Mrs. Tillingham, when, safe in a hansom, they were bowling downtown. "An *awful* woman!"

Mrs. Graves was, at all events, a most unhappy woman, that holiday season. She and Mrs. Sherman were living in apparent amity, but the terrible word had not been withdrawn, and Mrs. Sherman, possibly in all innocence obeying that instinct that bids us be revenged on *someone*, even if one cannot strike back at Fate, maintained toward her old friend a heart-breaking iciness of demeanor. The older woman was strong enough to bear bravely the blow that had brought her to her knees, and possibly she felt some relief in her submission to her son, for her former position had been untenable, and she

had known it. But Ellen Graves was weaker, and for years Julia Sherman had been the crutch on which she leaned, and without the crutch the lonely woman knew not how to walk.

Molly, full of Christmas plans, and happy in her husband's victory, went her way trying to give pleasure to her seniors, and not observing that relations between them were strained. But Mrs. Graves's long nose grew white, her thin throat skinnier, and her eyes were even redder than usual. The poor woman had lost her only consolation. Thus time passed and Christmas Eve arrived.

It was one of those fortunately unusual Christmas seasons, a snowy one. The air was still, the amazing clearness of American atmosphere seemingly increased by the sharp cold.

Imagine the crowds of eager-faced shoppers; the glare of the early-lighted streets; the keen ring of horses' hoofs on the asphalt; the hurrying, inspiring, exciting holiday mental atmosphere of New York.

Then imagine William Sherman making his way uptown on foot, conscious of a pain in his side and a certain heaviness in his head, to try to overcome which he had decided to walk home. He made his way with the unconscious swiftness of his kind, threading his way through the throng, dodging frost-irritated horses, escaping all the perils of our badly policed metropolis, and at about six, after a short stop at Tiffany's, reached home.

Molly was out with her mother, and his own mother had gone to see a friend who had come down from New Shakespeare to visit a married niece; so only Mrs. Graves welcomed the weary man.

"Why, Willie," she exclaimed, coming to the door of the dining-room as he took off his coat, "you look real sick. Aren't you well?"

"Oh, yes, I'm all right. I've got a headache and feel as if I'd taken cold, but it's nothing. What are you making?"

Mrs. Graves smiled with faint pride.

"Soon's your mother went out, I just buckled down to make wreaths,

and I've got eighteen done. Like 'em?"

Sherman, who had followed her into the dining-room, looked around him. The table was filled with evergreens and hideous dried flowers known to some people as everlasting.

It is to be supposed that these flowers are originally rooted in earth and draw their sustenance therefrom, but there is a dry wanness in their complexion, a blankness in their expression that renders this belief almost untenable. Of all flowers they surely are the most odious, and these particular specimens, imported from New Shakespeare for this occasion, and dyed by some unkind hand, glowed in the lamplight in hideous shades of yellow, magenta, purple and crude green.

Sherman was silent for a moment, and then he said gently:

"Why, Mother Graves, Alvina used to make these wreaths, didn't she?"

Mrs. Graves's red eyes refilled. "So you remember! Oh, Willie, to think that if she hadn't got her feet wet at the Sampson's baby's funeral she'd have been with us today!"

The old woman's thin fingers were busy as she spoke, tying bunches of mixed flowers to a stiff wreath of pine-sprays.

"And that baby got the croup because her mother couldn't resist going to Abijah Cobb's wedding. She was always a silly little idiot, Merry Smith was. Alvina never could abide her. Seems as if it was a warning."

Sherman picked up a bunch of flowers and rubbed his nose with it to hide a quiver of the lips that he could not altogether repress. Poor Mrs. Graves's ideas were so curiously involved.

"Your mother's gone to see Mrs. Dr. Mabie. She came down to see Bella Marvin. Seems's if all New Shakespeare was coming to New York. Why, Willie, I declare your teeth are chattering. Are you cold?"

Sherman sat down by the fire and leaned toward it.

"Yes, I am. Think I've got a chill. Perhaps you wouldn't mind asking Jen-

nie to bring me some hot water, and I'll take some whisky."

"Willie, whisky won't do you any good. I—won't you go to bed?"

"Yes, but I want the whisky first, please."

Mrs. Graves dropped her work and came to him, her faded eyes bright. "Willie, Mrs. Benson was here yesterday and she was telling me about Miss Brown, the—the *healer*. She just sits and prays by you and you get well right straight off. She lives just off Park avenue; I've got the address——"

Even yet poor Sherman's good-nature was not exhausted.

"No, thanks. I'd rather have the whisky——"

As he spoke, Molly and Mrs. Tillingham came in laughing and laden with packages.

Mrs. Graves, as was her wont on the appearance of Mrs. Tillingham, gathered together her belongings and went to her room, and ten minutes later Sherman lay in bed, whisky inside, hot bottle outside him, while Molly, sitting by him, displayed her purchases.

"I do hope your mother will like her things," she said, putting the silver spectacle-case back into its box, "and now I'll show you Mrs. Graves's present. I didn't want to tell you about it until I could show it to you. Mrs. Moberly told me about the girl who did it, and I do think it is lovely, don't you?"

Sherman took the box and opening it, looked at its contents in silence for several minutes.

"Why, Molly," he said, his voice a little unsteady, "what a dear you are!"

The present was a small miniature of poor Alvina, exquisitely painted on ivory, and set in small pearls, as a brooch. Mrs. Sherman, who had been in the secret, had been the painter's advisor as to the color of the eyes, and the photograph from which the miniature had been, under Molly's commands, much improved upon.

Poor Alvina's sharp nose had been a trifle rounded, her small pale eyes made larger and brighter, and she herself would hardly have recognized her pale wisp of frizzed hair in the smartly waved, golden locks of the miniature.

"It's prettier than she was, poor girl," said Sherman, as he handed it back to her, "but Mother Graves won't know that. And it will delight her. Poor woman, she is very sad, and Christmas is a sorrowful time for people who are——lonely."

He broke off, an expression of pain on his face. "Give me a drink of water, will you, dear?" he added. He felt very ill, and his headache was worse, but he insisted on Molly's going to the Moberly's Christmas-tree as she had promised, and she, unused to illness and entirely reassured by his smiles, went off with many regrets that he was unable to accompany her, but quite without anxiety.

When she had gone, and Mrs. Graves had disappeared from the room, he told his mother that he had better have a doctor.

"It might be influenza, you know," he said, "and the pain in my side is pretty bad. Do you know of a good man?"

Yes, Mrs. Sherman knew of a good man. Quite by chance she had that very day seen a doctor who had come to see Bella Marvin's husband.

"He's a Doctor Williams, and his mother came from down near Portland. He was raised there and came here when he was young man. I'll ring up a messenger and send for him at once. Seems as if the Lord had sent me to see Martha Mabie today!"

The old lady loved nursing, and when the doctor arrived, he found the sickroom in beautiful order, water and spoons ready, a kettle steaming over the fire.

"Moist air's always good, isn't it?" the old lady said to him, and then she made him sit down and stood by the bed while he examined the patient. Dr. Darius Williams was a wise-looking old man, with a deep voice and fine manners. When he found that Sherman had high fever and every sign of pneumonia, he wrote a prescription—homœopathic, all the First Presbyterian people of New Shakespeare were homœopaths—and, prescribing absolute quiet, withdrew, with a promise of returning early the next morning.

He spoke with a sort of ruminating buzz, lingering in a quaint way on his vowels, and staring with slightly bovine brown eyes at Mrs. Sherman as she listened to him.

"It's not dangerous, is it, doctor?" she asked anxiously.

"Dangerous? We hope not, Mrs. Sherman, we hope not. It's a heavy cold; a very heavy cold, Tomorrow I can judge better. In the meantime a good night's sleep will be the best thing for the patient."

He was a good man, this old Darius Williams; he was a faithful church-goer; would have gone to the stake for the doctrine of predestination; gave generously of his small income for the propagation of that consoling belief in heathen countries; loved the memory of his dead wife; told the truth; and paid his taxes with exemplary punctuality.

But he was, because a very stupid man, an unusually inefficient doctor. And his medicine, taken patiently for three days by Billy Sherman, was as without result as if it had been pure water.

Molly, deeply distressed by her husband's suffering, sat up one night with him, his mother the next. The third had now come, and Mrs. Graves's turn to watch had come with it.

Sherman lay half-unconscious, his unshaved face dark against the pillows, one thin arm thrown up over his head. The clock had just struck nine. Molly, exhausted with nursing and tears, had been taken away to her room by her mother, and Mrs. Sherman was asleep in a rocking-chair in the passage. Her wrinkled face looked worn and white in the crude gaslight. She was dreaming, and moaned every now and then.

Suddenly she woke, and sat staring at the wall opposite. Why had she not thought of that before! There was flaxseed in the house, too; she had got it when the cook burnt her hand. Down the passage she crept; past the open door of the sick-room to the stairs, and thence to the kitchen. A few minutes later, as she came up again, a kitchen-plate in her hand containing a slimy-

looking greenish poultice, she met Mrs. Tillingham.

"Oh, Mrs. Sherman," began that lady, who had lost much of her airiness in her real anxiety for her son-in-law; "I was looking for you. Molly is sound asleep, thank heaven—I have just left her——"

"I've made a flaxseed poultice for his chest," returned the old woman hurriedly; "when I've put it on his chest I'll come out to you——"

But Mrs. Tillingham followed her into Sherman's room, and helped not unskillfully to place the big, evil-smelling plaster on the unconscious Sherman's chest.

"Oh, William, William," moaned his mother, as she buttoned his nightshirt, "I can't bear it!"

Mrs. Tillingham took her by the arm and led her back to the passage.

"Neither can I bear it," she said abruptly. "That doctor is an old *noo-dle*. He doesn't know enough to come in when it rains. If you don't get another man, Billy will *die*."

Mrs. Sherman began to cry. "Bella Marvin's husband's folks *always* have him," she said. "They set great store by him."

"I don't care a pin for Bella Marvin's folks. He's a silly old pompous idiot, and Billy's getting worse every minute. He ought to have nurses, too. Real ones from a hospital."

But this was a false step.

"Never!" cried Mrs. Sherman. "Dr. Williams might not have objected to a consultation with another doctor, but no strange woman shall nurse my boy as long's I've strength to stand up."

Mrs. Tillingham was too clever in her way to be easily angry, but her nerves were worn out, and she really did believe that Sherman was dying for lack of proper treatment. So she lost her temper, for the first time, as far as Mrs. Sherman was concerned.

"That is perfect *rubbish*," she cried vehemently. "A trained nurse can be of more use to him than a *thousand* mothers, and if you keep on wasting time with that old donkey, and pottering about with your poultices that no



one uses any more you'll just be murdering him!"

As she spoke, Mrs. Graves came out of her room, prepared for the night in a limp black dressing-gown and cloth shoes, her thin hair drawn tightly back into a small twist at the back of her head.

Mrs. Sherman, in her anger and distress, forgot the gulf that had been growing between her old friend and herself, and turned to her.

"Ellen Graves, I've lived to my age to be told that I'm murdering my son," she gasped.

"I'm not surprised, Julia—I mean, that Mrs. Tillingham should say it. Mrs. Tillingham, in the presence of—of this sickness, you should bridle your tongue."

Mrs. Tillingham stared.

"Don't be angry, Mrs. Graves," she said gently, with one of those unexpected accesses of understanding that surprise us all at times. "I only want Mrs. Sherman to understand that this doctor is doing no good, and that we—she, I mean—ought to call in someone else."

Mrs. Graves nodded slowly. "Well, I agree with you, Mrs. Tillingham. I don't know's Dr. Williams is helping Willie much. Doctors never do, as far's I can see—"

"And then a nurse. Surely you believe in trained nurses, Mrs. Graves? Of course a mother's love can do much, but—"

Mrs. Sherman stared at them. That these two should be talking peaceably together was so amazing that she could hardly believe her ears; but she was, after all, William's mother.

"Well," she remarked, with fierce dryness, "as soon as William's better he can choose his own doctor, and get half-a-dozen nurses if he wants 'em. But as long as he's unconscious I shall stick to the doctor he had me send for, and—no nurse shall come into this house."

Without waiting for an answer, she passed her two hearers and went into her own room. Mrs. Graves looked after her wistfully.

"Poor Julia," she said, "I must go

after her and put her to bed. She nearly fainted this evening, she's so tired. It's awful when folks are so pig-headed. If you'll sit by Willie till I come back, Mrs. Tillingham, I'll not be long."

Mrs. Tillingham nodded and went to the sickroom. An hour later every one in the house was asleep but Mrs. Graves, who sat stiffly in a cane-seated chair by Sherman's bed, and the little Southern widow, who was just stealing through the house-door into the wet night.

Mrs. Graves sat motionless in her chair, her bony hands in her lap, her eyes fixed on Sherman's flushed face as he tossed and moaned in his sleep. It was plain to her that he was worse—and there is no torture so bad as that of, in any emergency, being forced to use remedies or means in which one has no faith.

Mrs. Graves did not believe in Dr. Williams, and in her gloomy way she was quick-sighted. The drops prescribed by the kind old man were doing no good, and she saw this. The fast-cooling poultice on Sherman's chest was too slight a remedy for an illness like his. Moreover, ever since Alvina's death the poor woman's faith in doctors was a thing dead. Alvina had at first had, to her ignorant eyes, only a cold, and the doctor had failed to cure even it. Then, when galloping consumption had declared itself, the Boston specialist for whom Willie had sent had been as powerless. Alvina had died, and therefore her mother knew that doctors were, as she put it, "no good."

Dreadfully she looked at the man who had been, who still was, as she felt with vague conviction, Alvina's husband. He had always been good to Alvina; in his heart of hearts he must even now love her best. And—he was dying because doctors were no good. Hannah Benson and she had been talking about it only a few days before. Hannah's fourteen-year-old son had recently died from scarlet fever, the doctors having failed to save him!

"Never's long's I live," Hannah had

declared, "shall another one darken my doors."

Sherman stirred in his stupor, and gave a slight groan. Could no one save him?

Suddenly the old woman started, her cold, thin hands clasped tightly together. Miss Brown, the Faith-Healer! Hannah Mabie had told her about this woman and her cures. The child given up by everyone, whose diphtheritic throat had been cured by her prayers, the paralytic she had caused to walk, the woman with cancer. Miss Brown, whose address was up-stairs in Mrs. Graves's own work-basket, who lived only a few blocks away!

Now, Mrs. Graves was a coward. She feared the streets of New York even by day, and at night they were to her a jungle full of lurking terrors. So it was an act of real bravery when, half an hour later, having waked the cook and left her in charge of the sick man, the old woman, hastily clad and wrapped in a black woollen shawl, went out into the blowy darkness, all alone.

Molly Sherman, worn out with anxiety and watching, slept for hours without moving, and then suddenly found herself wide awake. Had someone called?

Did Billy want her?

No; for Mrs. Graves would, in that case, have come to call her, and she was alone. Switching on the light, she looked at her watch and was surprised to find that it was only twelve o'clock. She was glad to have waked, for she could steal in and have a look at Billy.

A moment later, looking like a pretty ghost in her straight-falling white dressing-gown, her curly hair tumbled and untidy, she pushed open the sickroom door and looked in.

Billy was asleep, his face flushed and dry, his eyebrows drawn together as they had been for the last twelve hours. The room, dimly lighted only by a shaded lamp on the floor at the foot of the bed, was apparently empty but for him, and his wife was surprised at this until she saw, at the far end of it, a big armchair with a pillow and a person in it, its back turned toward her.

It was unlike Mrs. Graves to go to sleep at her post, but no doubt Billy had been sleeping so quietly that she had thought she might seize the opportunity of forty winks.

Molly came in very softly, and, sitting down by the bed, laid her hand gently on Sherman's hot brow. He stirred as she did so, and moving his parched lips with difficulty, ejaculated slowly, "Poor Alvina."

It is to Molly's credit that her sane young mind at once understood, and that no jealous pang struck her heart at the words. "Dear Billy," she whispered.

He opened his eyes and looked dully at her.

"Go to bed, dear," he murmured, and with a little low cry of joy she sank on her knees by him and pulled his head to her arm. "Darling old Billy! You know me, don't you? Oh, I am so glad. You are better, sweetheart, better!"

He shook his head wearily. "Poor little Molly. Kiss me."

Then his eyes closed and he slept again.

Luckily her position was a fairly comfortable one, for hardly daring to draw a deep breath she knelt there, holding him for nearly an hour.

Stiffer and stiffer she grew; her back ached, her knees burned, her hair tickled her neck and nearly drove her mad. Also, of course, her nose began to itch frantically, and only with the greatest difficulty, moving her hand an inch at a time, could she manage to scratch it.

The clock struck the quarters, and from the armchair came an occasional snore; Sherman did not move. Frowning fiercely, his wife stuck to her task, her small face growing paler and paler as her overtaxed strength waned.

And then, as the clock struck one, her eyes closed and, as she fell asleep, her gently relaxed muscles allowed Sherman's head to sink without a jar back to the pillow, while she herself tumbled into a little heap on the white bear rug by the bed.

"Well, doctor, here we are——" Mrs. Tillingham, without seeing Molly, in the

faint light, ushered the great man into the room, not without a certain conscious display of her own charm of voice and accent. She had fared through wind and weather and succeeded only with great difficulty in persuading a very sleepy butler to arouse his overworked master; she had been energetic, persevering, and was sincerely interested in the welfare of her son-in-law, but the great doctor was a handsome, iron-gray man with firm violet eyes, and Emily Tillingham was Emily Tillingham still.

"Shall I waken him?"

"You will allow me to make more light— Good heavens, what's that?"

"That" was Molly, on whose long hair he had trodden, and who moved and moaned as he did so.

"Marie! *Mon pauvre choul!* It's my daughter, my poor little devoted darling——"

Mrs. Tillingham's voice was admirable, and as the big doctor picked the white heap up in his arms and laid her on the sofa, she clasped her hands eloquently.

"Poor little girl," he murmured, "she is worn out."

A moment later as he sat down by the bed, the unshaded lamp throwing all its light on the sleeping man, the door opened again and Mrs. Graves came in, proudly piloting a very fat woman in a beaded mantle. "Oh!"

The doctor turned. "Please make no noise," he said.

"It's Dr. Fitzpatrick, Mrs. Graves," whispered Mrs. Tillingham, with all the amiability of victory. "I went and asked for him myself."

"Dr.—Dr. Fitzpatrick?" returned Mrs. Graves, her nose livid. "You called him in!"

"Ssh! Yes. You know we agreed, dear Mrs. Graves, that—the other doctor did not seem to understand the case."

"I'd like to know," hissed the other, "what right *you* have to call in any doctor to Willie Sherman."

Fitzpatrick turned. "Please make no noise, ladies," he remarked quietly.

"And—I should prefer to examine the patient alone."

Then the fat woman, who had removed the beaded mantle and appeared in a green plaid blouse decorated with small brass buttons, came forward and spoke.

"Don't fight, Mrs. Graves," she said soothingly. "He is your son-in-law, and I have come. If faith can cure him, he shall live."

"Ah, a faith-healer?" queried Fitzpatrick gravely.

"Yes. I am Miss Brown."

"Oh, doctor, *deah* doctor," pleaded Mrs. Tillingham, "*please* don't mind. Please make your examination. Mrs. Graves is the mother of his first wife, and devoted to him. She—she really thinks she acted for the best!"

Mrs. Graves, afraid to order this imposing gentleman to leave the house, yet firmly convinced that his ministrations would prove fatal to the sick man, stood by the table twisting her hands together while unshed tears reddened her eyes and distorted her face.

"Please begin, Miss Brown," she urged, nervously; "don't lose time. Oh, *please pray!*"

Fitzpatrick was a big-hearted man who knew very much about human nature. Whatever the fat woman might be, and he knew that it was quite on the cards that she was sincere, poor Mrs. Graves's suffering was unmistakable.

"Miss Brown," he said, quietly, "I have no objection to your praying over my patient, on the condition that you do nothing further."

Miss Brown's three chins wagged haughtily.

"*Nothing further!* I will cure Mr. Sherman, and that is enough."

Kneeling down by the bed, she began to pray, silently, with apparent fervor, while Mrs. Graves looked on, utterly at a loss at the turn affairs had taken. Mrs. Tillingham, perfectly satisfied, sat down with folded hands and watched the doctor as he made his careful examination.

At last he turned to her.

"There was much fever last night?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. Dr. Williams was very much alarmed—do you think—oh, Dr. Fitzpatrick, *do you think you can save him? It would kill my daughter if you couldn't.*"

"He will be saved," observed the fat woman, with pompous suddenness. "*Faith* can save him. I will save him!"

Fitzpatrick again laid his finger on the sick man's pulse, and was about to answer when once more the door opened, and Mrs. Sherman came in.

"For the land's sake!" The old woman stood still in her amazement. "Ellen Graves," she asked peremptorily, "who are these people?"

"Dear Mrs. Sherman," cooed Mrs. Tillingham, taking her hand, "don't be alarmed——"

"I am not alarmed. I want to know who has brought these strange people into my son's house."

Then Fitzpatrick explained his presence in a few words, and the furious old woman's innate politeness awoke. It was abominable impertinence of Mrs. Tillingham to bring another doctor to her son, but the doctor was not to be blamed.

"I am obliged to you," she said to him, with fine courtesy, "but Mrs. Tillingham has made a mistake. My son called in Dr. Darius Williams at the beginning of his sickness and has not expressed any wish to change physicians. Please excuse my plain-speaking."

Molly, whom the voices had at last awakened, sat in the background rubbing her eyes and wondering, while the cook, a vision in a red-flannel petticoat and a blue shawl, stole silently from the room. Before Fitzpatrick could answer Mrs. Sherman, the old woman had passed him and gone to the still-kneeling Miss Brown.

"What are *you* doing here?" she demanded. "Surely you are not a doctor?"

At this point Mrs. Graves burst into painfully suppressed sobs. "Oh, Julia, don't be so—so terrible," she

gasped. "It's Miss Brown, the Faith-Healer. Mrs. Mabie told me about her. She cures folks that all the doctors have given up. She——"

But Mrs. Sherman had no patience with faith-healers.

"Get up," she said severely, to the fat woman, "and leave the house."

Miss Brown scrambled to her feet and put on the mantle. "He will die," she retorted, "and it will be your fault."

Then Dr. Fitzpatrick, who had enjoyed the scene rather than otherwise, turned to Molly.

"Mrs. Sherman," he said, "do not be alarmed. Your husband will not die."

"Then," cried Mrs. Graves, the first of them all, during the whole conversation, to forget to whisper, "Miss Brown has saved him!"

"No. Wait one moment, Miss Brown." Fitzpatrick raised his hand authoritatively. "Miss Brown has not saved him, nor have I. A greater than either of us has done it. Nature. The fever has gone, as I tried to tell Mrs. Tillingham some time ago. Mr. Sherman will live."

In ten minutes' time the room was empty, but for the sick man, his wife, and his triumphant old mother. Mrs. Tillingham and Mrs. Graves had been banished to their rooms, and through the darkness the two intruders were speeding homeward.

## XI

A MONTH later Billy Sherman and his wife got out of a certain train that had brought them North from a certain delightful place in the middle South, and, getting into a hansom, started uptown.

"Oh, Billy, I *do* hope things will go better now," Molly cried, slipping her hand into his. "They are all such dears, really, it is awful that they can't get on together."

"I know. And yet, dear, we must just make up our minds to put up with it, you know. Your

mother and mine, of *course*, and poor Mother Graves—no, as long as she lives, my home must be hers."

He said it quite simply, the big Billy. It never occurred to him that his unselfishness was anything unusual, or anything for which he deserved praise, and Molly, realizing this, almost adored him for it.

"Of course your home—*our* home—is hers, dear," she returned, "and I really think they will all settle down in time, and—and learn to appreciate each other."

"Yes—" rather doubtfully. "I am sorry Fanfreluche killed poor Puff, though. Mother Graves was so fond of Puff. Her letter didn't sound very—very *appreciative*, did it?"

Molly burst out laughing. "No, it certainly did not. But she *must* not talk so about the major, Billy! It really is unkind, and you know mama was very sorry about Puff, and said so, and offered to give her another dog."

"I know. Your mother is really very patient and kind. It's just that Mrs. Graves don't understand her. At her age, you know, a woman in New Shakespeare is *old*, and your mother is so young!"

"Of course she is. I'll ask her not to let the major send her roses. Oh, Billy, *do* you remember when we came home the last time? The first time, it was, too. And how neither of us knew the other's mother was there—to say nothing of poor Alvina's mother? Oh, how funny it was!"

They both laughed, and then, suddenly grave, he bent and kissed her in the dusk of the February evening.

"You are very patient and sweet about it, Molly," he said gently. "And I am grateful."

"Billy—it's only because I'm so happy. So long as I have you, there might be six mothers-in-law in the house!"

The hansom stopped and they got out, he opening the door with his latch-key.

"I'll bet you a dollar we see Mother Graves first," whispered Molly with a giggle, as they went in.

The drawing-room was empty, and as she took off her coat, Molly wondered audibly:

"Can they all be upstairs waiting for us together? Or—shall we find them all weltering in each other's blood?"

Suddenly she stopped. Sherman had picked up a letter from the chimney-piece, and was reading it.

"Molly—mother has—gone! Listen."

His voice trembling a little, he read the letter aloud. Just a few affectionate, sensible words, expressing the writer's conviction that it was better for everybody concerned that she should go back to New Shakespeare:

"I have not told Ellen and Mrs. Tillingham. I couldn't bear to talk about it, William, but I know I am wise. Give my love to Mary, and tell her I hope she will come sometimes to visit your and her affectionate mother,  
JULIA SHERMAN."

After a long pause, Sherman cleared his throat and exclaimed briskly, "She is right, dear old mother; she will be happier there, and we can have her to visit us often. Poor old mother."

Molly put her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"We will go to her as soon as it's a little warmer, and bring her home for a long visit."

"Yes. Now—let's go up to your mother, dear."

But Mrs. Tillingham's room was empty. Gone her pretty silver toilet things, gone the books and photographs, gone the dressing-gowns in the wardrobe. And on the table another letter lay—a little mauve letter smelling of heliotrope, gracefully penned, gracefully expressed:

"*Ma petite Marie*: It is best that I should go. You know that I have not meant to be an element of discord, but you also know that I have been one. And Billy has been so kind! So I have gone, my darling, and guess how? The major has persuaded me to marry him at last, so Mrs. Tillingham is no more, *vive* Mrs. Carter!

We shall be married by the time this reaches you, and I will write from Washing-



ton. My love to Billy, and to dear Mrs. Sherman and Mrs. Graves my best wishes. I am glad to think you will all be happier without me.

Your affectionate mother,  
EMILY TILLINGHAM.  
(for the last time.)

P. S. Walsingham sends you his love.

Molly cried, then she laughed, then she wiped her eyes and said she was glad; that dear mama would be much happier with a man to take care of her, and that the major really was a dear.

"But to think, Billy, that after all, only Mrs. Graves is faithful to us! To us, who thought none of them could live without us!"

Billy nodded. "It is queer. Only—somehow, Molly, I feel in my bones that she's gone, too! Let's go to her room!"

He was right. All unknown to one another the three women had made their preparations and decamped.

Mrs. Graves's letter, written on lined paper, was short:

DEAR WILLIE:

I have gone. You and Mary have been kind, and I am sure you will be sorry to have

me go, but I could not stand it any longer. I shall not speak against anyone, but I have been hardly treated, not as Alvina's mother deserved.

So please explain to your mother. How I can live without her and you, I don't know, but I must. I am going to New Shakespeare, where I belong. Oh, Willie, if she had only lived, all this would never have happened.

ELLEN GRAVES.

P. S. I leave the chairs, though you gave them to me; they will be a comfort to you.

Neither Sherman nor his wife laughed. Indeed, Molly's eyes were again wet as she handed him back the letter.

They went slowly downstairs and rang for tea.

Then Sherman took Molly on his lap and put his arms round her.

"Dear heart," he said softly, "I should have never taken a step to bring it about, but—it is better so. It is better for married people to live alone."

Molly put her mouth close to his ear. "Billy," she whispered, as red as a rose, "I—I don't think we shall live alone long!"



## THE RACHMANINOFF PRELUDE

By Gertrude Huntington McGiffert

I HEAR the distant, far retreat,  
The ponderous tread  
Of the ancient dead,  
The ominous beat of invisible feet.  
I hear the undersong of death—  
Through darkling mists it echoeth  
In aching, desolate, haunting strains.  
I hear the Past stalk by in chains,  
I hear God's bugle thoughts resound,  
I hear the time-spurred ages tread  
Up steep, eternal hills that bound  
The unpent skies. And yet again  
That awful tread  
Of the ancient dead,  
Passing beyond man's trembling ken,  
And on and on  
And fainter, farther, on and on,  
The beat of far retreating feet,  
The ponderous tread  
Of the ancient dead.

## THE ROAD TO ALAMO

By Elliott Flower

JOHNSON of Campo listened to the girl, and he was mightily perplexed.

To Johnson of Campo came with their troubles Americans, Mexicans, Indians, and those in whom there were many combinations of the blood of these three, and Johnson advised them all. Except when one's business had had some connection with the revenues of Uncle Sam, there was nowhere else to go, for there was little to Campo except the store, presided over by Johnson, and the United States Custom House, presided over by Colonel Jones. Campo was so small, and so hidden, that the traveler, coming out of the mountains, seemed to stub his toe on it before he really awoke to its existence. The little frame hotel—the third of its trio of public buildings—was there primarily for the purpose of furnishing accommodation to those who had business with Johnson and Colonel Jones.

So the girl was referred to Johnson, and Johnson was mightily perplexed. She was very different from the girls he was accustomed to see: her neat-fitting cloth gown, her jaunty little traveling-cap, her gloved hands, her clear complexion, her way of carrying herself, her manner toward him, all showed her to be a girl unaccustomed to the exposure and rough life of the border. She was plainly a product of city life and city conditions, and not at all at home in her present surroundings. Still, she was not one of the helpless kind, and she was decidedly pretty. The dust of a long stage-ride was on her clothes, stray locks of hair had blown loose, and her face was be-

ginning to show faintly the work of a hot sun, but sun, dust and wind had failed to conceal the fact that she was pretty.

"I don't know what I can do, miss," said Johnson in his perplexity. "Alamo, the gold camp, is a good two days' ride straight down through the mountains—all of ninety or a hundred miles. You must have been misdirected. You see, they're a bit careless about geography back here, and they get towns misplaced on some of the maps. Besides, Alamo is a handy and popular name with the Mexicans."

"I understood there was a stage," she urged doubtfully.

"From Ensenada, yes," he returned, "but not from Campo. I guess the only thing for you to do is to go back by stage to San Diego, take the boat to Ensenada, and then the stage to Alamo."

"I can't," she declared after a moment of anxious thought. "I've got to go on from here. Isn't there some one to drive me?"

"Do you care to be two days in the mountains with an unknown Mexican?" he asked.

She faltered. The thing seemed to be impossible, but so was any other course that was open to her, for reasons that Johnson could not know. "Would it have to be a Mexican?" she inquired. "I—I'd feel safer with an American. Isn't there somebody going that way?"

"Great Lucifer!" cried Johnson, his face suddenly lighting up. "I never thought of that. You wait here a minute."

He hurried over to the hotel and ac-

costed a young man who was sitting on the little porch, trying to make the best of an uncomfortable situation.

"Say!" exclaimed Johnson, "will you take a lady to Alamo with you?"

"What!" cried the young man. "Well, I guess not. This is no lady's trip."

Johnson sat down beside him and explained the circumstances. "Pretty girl," he argued in conclusion, for he knew something of youthful masculine nature. "I guess you saw her. She came in on the stage about an hour ago. Little dinky traveling-cap, real cloth dress, and all the fixings."

The young man had seen her, and he reversed his decision promptly.

"I'll take her," he said.

"All right. Come over to the store, and we'll arrange it there."

Now, strangely enough, the young man who had been inveigled into taking the responsibility of delivering a girl at Alamo, after he had once curtly refused, suddenly found himself asking a favor instead of granting one. Johnson explained to her confidentially that he was "an artist or author or something of that sort," who had been at Campo two days making preparations for the trip, and he seemed to be a frank, honest, gentlemanly fellow, but her problem suddenly assumed momentous proportions. He expected to reach the Juarez mining camp the first night, and there were American women there, but they might not get that far. He had engaged a Mexican guide, but there certainly was nothing reassuring in that. The country, the people and the life were strange to her, and it was a serious matter to entrust herself to the care of a young man previously unknown to her. Then, too, there was the question of propriety. It was only a question of personal safety at first, but it soon became one of propriety, and she knew that Mrs. Grundy would talk scandalously of a young girl who thus cut loose from the safeguards of civilization with a strange young man and his Mexican guide. It speaks well for the impression made by the young man that her thoughts so quick-

ly turned from any question of peril to one of appearances.

But she had to reach Alamo, and this seemed the only way to get there.

"Thank you so much for your kindness," she said finally. "I'll try not to be much trouble."

"Then it's all settled!" he exclaimed, evidently pleased.

"Why, yes—except—er—don't you think it would be convenient and a little more conventional if we knew each other's names?"

Thereupon they both laughed at the absurdity of the situation, and it developed that he was Mr. Howard Hendon and she was Miss Alice Carne. He was making the trip in the interests of his father, a capitalist, who had been importuned to make some mining investments at Juarez and Alamo, and she was going to join her uncle at the latter place.

A little later they sat on the hotel porch together and talked of the trip before them, each naturally seeking to know the other better. She had removed the stains of travel, arranged her hair, and, finding her companion agreeable, was in a humor to enjoy the situation. He was deferential without being in the least diffident or embarrassed; he was jolly and manly and ready, but she would be mistress of the situation here in the mountains as she would be in a city drawing-room. It does not take a girl long to discover with what respect a man regards women and how susceptible he may be to feminine control.

"If you will pardon me," he suggested, "that little cap you are wearing is not exactly the thing for the trip we are undertaking. The stage has a top, but there will be nothing but your hat between you and the sun most of the time after we leave Campo, and the sun will be blistering hot. Have you any sort of a sun-hat where you can get at it?"

"No-o. Most of my baggage was left at San Diego, to be sent for. Uncle John will have to see to that. The stage wouldn't take it."

"People are expected to travel light

down here," he laughed. "But we'll have to see what Johnson can provide in the way of a hat. I suppose you didn't think to bring a sleeping-bag, either."

"A sleeping-bag?" she repeated. "What's that? Something to keep you from rolling out of bed? I don't need one, thank you."

"It's a canvas bag to sleep in," he explained. "You crawl into it feet first, and——"

"Impossible!" she interrupted, coloring slightly as she pictured herself trying to get into a sleeping-bag for a night's rest. "I'd rather sit up all night."

"We'll dispense with the sleeping-bag," he said, laughing. "That's really only necessary when one has to sleep in the open. But you'll need blankets. There are no guest-rooms, and people carry their own beds or go without."

Here was another mental picture to disturb her.

"I'll have to depend upon you," she returned thoughtfully. "I don't know anything about it, and I had no idea it was such a serious matter. I—I'm afraid I haven't enough money. You see," she went on hastily, as he tried to interrupt, "that's why I couldn't turn back and go by way of Ensenada. But Uncle John will make it all right when we get to Alamo, if—if——"

She was becoming miserably uncomfortable, and he hastened to reassure her. He would gladly have assumed the entire expense, but she naturally refused to put herself under any such obligations to him. The situation was sufficiently humiliating at best. She would pay her full share so far as her money went and would make up any deficiency as soon as they reached Alamo and Uncle John. Upon this basis the matter was finally settled.

"The fact is," she explained with whimsical plaintiveness, "I'm a sort of orphan waif being shipped from one uncle to another, and neither is very anxious to have me."

"Then why do you go to either?" he asked.

"What else can I do?" she inquired.

It occurred to him that so pretty a girl need not be dependent upon grumbling uncles a minute longer than it would take her to make some nice young man very happy, but it was a delicate subject to discuss on short acquaintance. So he suddenly discovered that Johnson was about to close up, and they went over there to make their purchases.

She left everything to him, except the selection of a hat. She was merely an interested spectator while he was purchasing blankets and all sorts of canned goods to supplement the stock of provisions, but she exercised her feminine prerogative of selecting her own hat, and she chose a Mexican wide-brimmed, cone-shaped, straw hat—a man's hat. It startled him for the moment—she was so essentially and delightfully feminine herself—but it was a wise choice. It had to be that or a sunbonnet, and under no sunbonnet would she have looked so piquant and captivating. When he saw her smiling at him from under that hat he was ready to surrender unconditionally: it took away the last remnant of conventionality, and made them—well, comrades, at least. He immediately discarded his cork helmet and bought a Mexican hat for himself.

Then she handed him her purse.

"Here is where my responsibility ends," she declared. "I am to be delivered at Alamo, like a package of freight, and you are making all the necessary disbursements. No," she insisted, as he tried to give it back to her; "I'm tired of being responsible for myself, and this puts all the responsibility on you. Besides, I'm wise. If you're a highwayman in disguise, I'd rather give it to you than have it taken from me; and if you're a trustworthy gentleman, I thus escape a lot of bother."

The care of a woman's purse establishes a bond of trust that is flattering to a man. Of course, under their arrangement, her share of the expenses would amount to more than the purse contained, but this advance delivery

was a pleasing proof of confidence. He dreamed about it that night—dreamed that he had the prettiest and most valuable little purse that mortal ever saw, for there was a girl with a Mexican hat inside of it.

He was waiting for her when she appeared the following morning. That dream seemed very absurd to him now, "about the quickest thing in the line of heart-action that I ever experienced," he thought—but five minutes after she joined him he had decided that the face under the Mexican hat was a sufficient excuse for any sort of a pleasing mental aberration. There was something romantic in the situation, too. Then, where all others were so different and accustomed to so different a life, they seemed to be brought closer together. For her part, the trust that she was compelled to repose in him made him more than a mere acquaintance. She had been awake a long time, thinking, thinking until she saw the futility of thinking more; she must trust him implicitly, and she was glad to find that she could. He impressed her that way.

The hour was five o'clock, but an early breakfast was ready for them, and they did ample justice to it. In spite of the heat of the day, the mornings are cool and bracing in the mountains, and dispose one to look with favor on hot biscuit and white sage honey. In consequence, they were in excellent spirits when they emerged from the hotel and found a Mexican, a saddled pony and a buckboard with two horses awaiting them.

Hendon nodded to the Mexican, but did not speak to him.

"He knows only Spanish, and I know only English," he explained.

"What!" exclaimed the girl. "You are going down into a strange country with a man you can't understand and who can't understand you!"

"Precisely," laughed Hendon. "He's the only man I could get. I had Johnson load him up with all the instructions necessary to get to Juarez, in case we find no one who can act as interpreter before that. It's only a day's ride."

"A whole day with a human being

that you can't talk to—can't even explain what you may want him to do. Am—I am I to ride with him?"

"Well, I rather guess not," he declared. "I intend to have the luxuries of this trip myself."

"You have a very nice way of saying things," she told him, "but didn't you originally intend to ride the pony?"

"Never!" he answered emphatically.

"The Mexican was going to drive me, but—"

"Oh, then the saddle pony is an additional expense," she interrupted, knitting her brows thoughtfully. "That must be charged to me, of course. I guess we'll sort of wake Uncle John up when we get there and present the bills for the delivery of his dear little niece."

"Please don't talk about such prosaic things until we get to Alamo," he pleaded. "I'm manager, by virtue of possession of your purse, and my managerial acts are not to be discussed on the road. Let me help you up."

The morning air was deliciously fresh, the mountains loomed high on all sides, the road was reasonably good, and the beginning of the ride was delightful. The spell was still upon them when they passed a boundary post that told them they were leaving California, U. S. A., and entering Baja (Lower) California, Mexico.

"Good-bye, Uncle Sam!" he cried lightly. "We're in Mexico now."

"And are you quite sure that you can manage a Mexican in Mexico?" she asked. "Somehow, it seemed different when we were in the United States."

"Oh, my Mexican's all right," he answered cheerfully. "I can manage him easy enough."

"Do you know anything about him?"

"Not a thing, except that Johnson told him what I wanted, and the first part of his contract is to land us at Juarez tonight. But I'll manage him."

"And the horses?"

"No trouble at all. I'm used to horses, although I haven't driven much with a brake, and that's a pretty important thing in the mountains."

"I'm glad you have so much confidence," she remarked mischievously,



"To manage two horses, a brake, a Mexican and a woman——"

"Stop there!" he interrupted; "when it comes to the woman, experience teaches me that I'll be managed, and I am content."

She smiled at this, but she entered no denial. She was thinking of the Mexican. She did not like Mexicans, and she did not like to feel that they were so much at the mercy of one of whom they knew nothing at all. It occurred to Hendon, too, that the fact that he was responsible for the safety of a woman put a very different complexion on the affair. If the Mexican proved false, their situation would be indeed perilous. Still, he was not a man to worry much over problems that were mere possibilities of the future. So he put it aside, and they talked lightly of the desolate grandeur of the country, while the sun climbed higher.

Then, in the high chaparral, the Mexican turned suddenly from the main road and headed for a cabin that was almost hidden from view. There was nothing to do but follow, so they continued after him.

There were many Mexican men loafing about the cabin, and they greeted Eduardo, the guide, familiarly, and were unmistakably and admiringly interested in the girl.

"I don't see why there should be so many men," she said anxiously.

Neither did Hendon, but there was no chance to back out now. He drove into the clearing, but he turned the horses so that they were headed back to the main road before stopping in front of the cabin. Then he tried to make Eduardo understand by signs that they must move on at once, but Eduardo only smiled and dismounted. He had a peculiarly bland and aggravating smile: it seemed to say, "Of course, I've got to make allowances for your foolishness, and be pleasant about it, but this is what we do." And Eduardo entered and was presently seen helping himself liberally from a black bottle.

"A mountain roadhouse!" exclaimed Hendon. "The man ought to be brained for bringing us here!"

But Eduardo came to the door and calmly motioned Hendon to get down and come in.

"The insolent scoundrel!" muttered Hendon, thoroughly aroused by the thought that the Mexican's thirst had brought him and the girl to this place, and that the Mexican now had the audacity to ask him to leave her there alone, the centre of a crowd of gaping men. "He has the nerve to want me to join him."

"Perhaps he wants to get you away," she suggested. "Don't leave me, please. I—I don't like the looks of these men."

"Neither do I," he admitted. "It may be all right, but it looks like a rendezvous of desperadoes. Brace yourself for a shock. I'll give the horses the whip and run for it, if there's a movement to interfere with us."

She gripped the edge of the seat nervously.

Eduardo still smiled and continued to extend his pantomimic invitation.

"You grinning monkey, quit that!" roared Hendon. "I'm going to stay right here."

Eduardo's smile was as bland and tolerant as ever, and others in the crowd were now smiling, also. They seemed to find the young man's anger amusing, possibly because it was so futile.

"Mount and move on!" ordered Hendon, pointing to Eduardo's horse, but the Mexican merely looked, nodded, smiled and gesticulated some more.

"They know how helpless we are," the girl whispered, now really frightened. "Look! One of them is getting at the horses' heads."

"Hold tight," was Hendon's reply. "This is no time to take chances."

Then, before he could act, another Mexican appeared at the door of the cabin and spoke to them in English.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "It is necessary, if you are going on, that it be arranged here. This is the custom house."

The ridiculousness of the situation, combined with the sudden feeling of relief, were too much for the girl, and

she began to laugh. Hendon looked at her sheepishly for a moment, and then he, too, laughed.

"All that frenzy for nothing," he said, "but how was I to know?"

A flagstaff, hitherto unnoticed, caught her eye, and she pointed to it. From it floated the Mexican flag.

Feeling very absurd, and with the consciousness that her laughing eyes were upon him, he went in and interviewed the customs official.

"Anyhow," he argued defensively, as they drove along again, "they don't have combination custom-houses and roadhouses in Uncle Sam's country, and you also thought——"

"Why, yes," she interrupted, "I thought for a moment I was going to be the fair maid of a border drama, but there had to be a hero, you know, and bold defiance of a prosaic collector of customs isn't exactly——"

"That's downright mean," he said. "I meant well, anyhow."

"And you did it really cleverly," she conceded. "Hold tight! We will now make a dash for liberty!" She mimicked his tone. Her raillery, however, was not of the disagreeable kind, and he was able to laugh with her, especially as he remembered that she had been quite as much at fault as he.

"And you manage your Mexican so well," she added, with merry maliciousness.

## II

It was late when Eduardo turned from the road to another adobe house. Eduardo had been responsible for many exasperating delays. They had met a wagon-train, and Eduardo had exchanged greetings, Mexican fashion, with the driver of each separate wagon, which means that he had stopped to talk about everything that either of them could think of and had given about five minutes more to an effort to think of something else before passing on. Then he had kept them waiting while he galloped off across the valley to transact some business with another Mexican.

They had had their luncheon in a

cabin that smelled to heaven of various Mexican dishes, made worse by a roaring fire in the cookstove, and some of their own provisions had been confiscated in payment for the coffee that they could not drink. The girl was very tired, but they certainly had not reached the Juarez mining camp. Nevertheless, Eduardo dismounted and began to unsaddle his horse.

"Juarez!" said Hendon vigorously, in an effort to make it clear that they must go on.

Eduardo smiled reassuringly, nodded, and repeated, "Juarez." That smile was becoming a nightmare: it was so bland and tolerant, and such a weapon of defence to all verbal assaults, that Hendon could have killed him for it.

A man came up from the barn, talked with Eduardo, and then turned to Hendon and the girl.

"You stop here tonight," he said in very fair English.

"We go to Juarez," asserted Hendon.

"This is Juarez," was the reply.

"This is no mining camp," declared Hendon.

"No; it is Juarez, the district. The mining camp lies beyond, but it is Juarez, as agreed, and the *senor* and *senora*——"

The girl gasped, and Hendon hastily interrupted.

"*Senorita*," he explained.

The man looked troubled. He glanced at the little cabin, from which two Mexican women were peering, and then at the couple before him.

"It is then different," he said doubtfully. "Possibly," with a gleam of hope, "the *senor* and *senorita* are soon to be——"

"Never mind what we're soon to be!" broke in Hendon. "We want to get to the mining camp."

"It is impossible tonight. If the *senorita* would——"

The *senorita's* face was very red, and Hendon again interrupted. There was no telling what a Mexican might propose.

"I've got my sleeping-bag, and I'm going to sleep out under a tree, anyhow," said Hendon, and the Mexican turned to explain the situation to the women in Spanish.

"How I wish I could do that, too," sighed the girl, as the open door gave her a glimpse of the interior. "I wonder if I couldn't arrange for a hammock."

"Hardly," answered Hendon. "There is almost certainly no hammock, for one thing, and these people probably wouldn't understand or permit it, for another."

But Hendon's announcement that he would sleep outside seemed to relieve the Mexicans, and one of the women beckoned to Miss Carne, while the other busied herself with supper arrangements. It was with pleasure that Hendon saw that this supper was to be in the open air; it was with additional pleasure that he noted that he and Miss Carne were to have it alone, the others apparently having finished theirs and Eduardo being left to shift for himself.

The girl was very silent during supper. Hendon attributed this to the fact that two women, two children and three men were interestedly watching them, but he learned afterwards that she had something of more weight on her mind.

"It's impossible!" she declared, when they had strolled a short distance from the house, and, with her permission, he was enjoying a cigar.

"What's impossible?" he asked.

"I can't sleep there," she said; "I simply can't do it. No wonder they take their dinner table outdoors as soon as the sun goes down. Think of being cooped in there with all those people! I'd rather sit up all night."

She sat down on a rock and looked up at him pathetically. The night was of the bright tropical kind. There had been no dusk or twilight; the sun, having finished its day's work, had simply quit suddenly, and the moon and stars were doing excellently as substitutes. The supper and the cooler air of the evening had driven away

much of her weariness, and she would have been in humor to enjoy the moon and the mountains, were it not for the problem of the night's rest.

"I'll sit up until they go to bed," she decided finally, "and then I'll wrap myself up in my blankets and do the best I can out here. Do—do you suppose there are snakes or wildcats or anything?"

"I don't think you need worry about them," he answered, it being his intention to sit up and keep watch if this plan should be carried out. "But your blankets have been taken in."

"I'll get them," she said.

She came back presently, smiling. When they were where they couldn't be easily seen, the smile became a laugh—a very hearty, almost hysterical laugh.

"It's no use," she said. "They've arranged everything, and I'll have to submit, and—and—it's almost funny enough to make me forget everything else. You ought to see the bed they've put up for me!"

"You will sleep inside?" he asked.

"Oh, I must," she answered, and laughed again. "They have gone to so much trouble for me that I can't do anything else. Why, they've fixed up a dilapidated old crib, broken off the railing at the foot so that my feet can hang over, and already made up the bed with my blankets. It is so delightfully ridiculous that I have forgotten everything else in the enjoyment of the humor of it. It's rickety, and it's too short, and it will probably break down with me in the middle of the night, but I've simply got to show my appreciation of their good intentions."

"It is fortunate," he laughed, "that you have a well-developed sense of humor. There's nothing like it for getting enjoyment out of discomfort. Give me the location of your crib and I'll make up my bed under the nearest window."

"Will you!" she exclaimed. "I feel so dreadfully alone and helpless with people I can't talk to and don't know anything about that it will be a real comfort to know that someone

I can trust and understand is within reach of my voice."

They were still laughing and joking over the arrangements for the night when the English-speaking Mexican came to them, and it occurred to Hendon to ask about the many stops Eduardo had made during the day.

"Eduardo has much business," explained the Mexican. "He carries many messages, and there is much for him to arrange. He also takes word back to Campo of some things. That is why he makes the trip."

"What!" cried Hendon.

"Eduardo comes through here often on such business."

"And I am paying him a good price for transacting his own business in his own way and in his own good time," commented Hendon. "We're paying for an exclusive trip, but we're only a little additional freight, to be delivered when he is ready. I don't think Eduardo is to be trusted or managed. Give me the woman every time." And he glanced at the girl humorously.

"The *senor*," said the Mexican gravely, "would seem to have her."

Thereupon they laughed and hastily changed the subject, but in the morning when they asked about Eduardo again, they did not laugh.

"Oh, Eduardo!" repeated their Mexican host, as if surprised at the question. "He has gone. He left two hours ago."

### III

EDUARDO, it was discovered after some further questioning, had not permanently deserted them, and he had left them buckboard and horses. He had merely started early because of business that would take him from the main road. It had already become apparent that Eduardo was not a man to consult the pleasure or convenience of anyone but himself. However, with the directions given, they were assured that they could not lose the way, that they would reach the Juarez

mining camp by noon, and that Eduardo would join them there. But they soon learned that, while a mountaineer might find the way sure and easy, there was ample opportunity for a tenderfoot to make a mistake. People largely made their own roads in that country. If a mountain freshet, in the rainy season interfered with progress, they chose a new route, and presently there was a new road that might rejoin the old one some distance farther on or might have an entirely different objective point. They were passing through a region in which there were occasionally ranches that did not lie on the main road, and to these ranches branch roads led. All in all, it was confusing, and the fact that all roads were uneven and tortuous made it impossible to judge solely by direction. They found it necessary to make some decisions that were merely guesses.

"I have made a lot of trouble for you," she remarked, as they settled one of these problems.

"How so?" he asked quickly.

"If it were not for me, there would have been no extra horse for Eduardo's escape, and you would not have lost your guide. You would have had him with you here."

"I would rather lose my guide than my—er—" He stopped as quickly as he had begun, and then made a fresh start. "I would rather lose the guide than the girl."

"That is very nice," she said, smiling. "It is the more appreciated because the girl has not found others so anxious not to lose her."

"The girl libels herself by the bare suggestion of such a thing," he declared.

"You forget," she said, "that the girl is being shipped from one uncle, who has wearied of her, to another, who doesn't want her, and that neither has taken much trouble to see that she does not go astray on the journey."

He was far too much of a gentleman to attempt to force her confidence, but the circumstances were conducive to candor, and soon she was telling something of her story.

She was an orphan, being shipped

from Uncle Philip, a Wisconsin farmer, to Uncle John, an Alamo miner. Uncle Philip had taken charge of her when her father died, but Uncle Philip was not prosperous and she had not proved to be a capable farm girl.

"I tried," she insisted, "but it wasn't in me. I'm afraid my father rather spoiled me, for the housework of which I was capable seems to be limited to making fudges and salads and doing fancy sewing. I have a certain facility with the needle, and a natural aptitude for keeping pretty well up with the fashions at small expense. Some girls have that, you know, but it isn't considered one of the indispensable virtues on a farm."

So Uncle Philip had decided that Uncle John ought to assume his share of the family burden. He had not said so, but he had begun to talk a good deal about Uncle John, and there had been some spirited correspondence between the two uncles. Uncle Philip had not told her that, either, but she had learned to read him pretty well, and she knew that Uncle John was not waiting to welcome her with open arms. Apparently, it had been left to Uncle Philip to get her to Alamo, and he had seemed to think that San Diego was right next door to it—that it would be a good deal like inquiring the way at the corner grocery store when she got that far.

"There, sir," she ended, with a sudden assumption of levity, "you have the story of a poor orphan girl."

But he refused to treat the matter lightly.

"Have you ever seen your Uncle John?" he asked.

"Never. I know almost nothing about him."

"You are likely to find the associations at Alamo even more uncongenial than those at the farm," he suggested.

"I know it," she returned gloomily. "Isn't what I have seen of the country enough to show that? I—I have had such a different life, and my friends and associates have been so different. It isn't the loss of luxury and comfort, but the people. I am sure I could learn

to do something to earn my own living in the surroundings with which I am familiar, but how can I try, without the money to live in the meantime?"

"Uncle John may be quite impossible," he suggested.

"Difficult, but not impossible," she returned. "He can't be impossible, for what can I do then?"

"I don't know," he answered. "I think I could find a substitute for Uncle John, but I'm not at all sure he wouldn't prove even more impossible."

"You're joking," she said. "It's all very absurd, anyhow. Of course I'll have to make the best of Uncle John, just as he will have to make the best of me, and perhaps he'll help me to learn to be self-supporting in some suitable way." But it was evident that she looked forward to Alamo with dismal forebodings. Forcing back her depressing thoughts a moment later, however, she glanced up with a smile and asked if he was quite sure they were on the right road.

"No, I am not," he admitted. "These mountain roads are confusingly tortuous, but our general direction seems to be east and it ought to be south. I shall inquire the way at the first opportunity."

It was noon—time for them to be at Juarez—before they found a living soul of whom to ask information, and this living soul was in a Mexican body. They had to rely upon signs and an occasional word as means of communication.

"Juarez mines?" asked Hendon, pointing straight ahead.

"*Desierto Colorado*," said the Mexican.

"Whew!" exclaimed Hendon. "Headed straight for the Colorado Desert."

"But this is Mexico," protested the girl.

"Of course," explained Hendon, "but you didn't suppose a desert would pay any attention to a little matter of state or national boundaries, did you? It slops over everything and gets down here, and we were



blindly going to it. Nice outlook, wasn't it?"

The girl shuddered. Deserts were associated in her mind with everything horrible, and she had a feeling that, if they got too close, it would reach out and take them in.

The Mexican was now pointing almost at right angles to the road.

"*Placeres Juarez*," he said.

"Juarez placers," repeated Hendon. "That's where we want to go, of course, but how are we going to get there from here?"

He pointed back over the road they had come, and then looked inquiringly at the Mexican. The latter shook his head. Then, first pointing directly ahead, he let his hand describe an arc to the right.

"*Camino a placers Juarez*," he explained.

"*Camino*," Hendon repeated, doubtfully; "I think that means 'road.'"

The Mexican, apparently understanding the last word, nodded.

"Then, if we hold to the right," Hendon went on, "we'll circle back to the Juarez road. Can't say how long it will take, but he evidently wants us to understand that it will be quicker than going back the way we came. I'm afraid I'm a good deal of a blunderer, Miss Carne. I ought to have ridden the pony and put Eduardo in here."

"Never!" she cried quickly. "If anyone is to be lost from the party, let it be Eduardo. I'd be frightened to death without you."

Then, realizing how this sounded, she blushed, and was glad that the discovery of a spring created a diversion by offering them a place for luncheon.

The afternoon ride was far more tedious and uncomfortable than that of the morning or the previous day. The sun was hot, the road was rough and her strength had been pretty severely taxed since leaving San Diego on the stage. She was very tired, and this fact did not escape him.

He was puzzling his head over some method of making it easier for

her, as they started down a steep, tortuous grade. His foot was firm on the brake, which he had learned to use almost mechanically now, when there was a snap and the buckboard seemed to leap forward among the horses.

"Hold tight!" he shouted. "The brake's busted."

Fortunately, mind and body acted quickly. Her first impulse was the feminine one, to hang to him, but she instinctively realized that he needed all possible freedom of action. The horses had given a frightened jump and were tearing down the trail. It seemed as if her head was almost jerked from her shoulders, but she gripped the edge of the seat and managed to hold on.

With a broken brake and such a start, there was no chance of stopping the horses; they could only be guided. She was frightened, desperately frightened, but there was no scream, no word, no action to disconcert him. He gave one quick glance, to assure himself that she kept her head and was not trying to jump, and then gave all his attention to the horses. On one curve the buckboard careened until they seemed to overhang the jagged rocks below, at another they balanced on two wheels until it seemed as if the weight of a feather would decide which way they would fall; the wheels skidded dangerously several times; stones lifted them into the air; but always they got back to the centre of the road, and finally the grade became easier, the speed of the horses slackened, and the danger seemed to be over. She even had time to admire his coolness, and she loosened her grip on the seat. She was pale, her heart was beating wildly, the vision of jagged rocks below seemed burned into her mind; but he had proved equal to the emergency and had brought her through safely. He himself was beginning to feel relief from the tension, when he saw ahead, almost under the horses' feet, a little ledge of rock jutting up from the road. It was not unusual and would amount to little under ordinary circumstances, but,

at the rate they were still going, it would give them a nasty jolt that might easily throw from the buckboard anyone who was not prepared for it. And she, recovering her composure, was looking up at him with a confident smile. He acted instinctively, without thought—simply took both reins in his right hand and caught her round the waist with his left as they struck the ledge. And it was a wise precaution.

When the buckboard came back to the road from which it had soared, there was an ominous crack, and it settled suddenly to one side. Before they could recover from this lurch, there was another crack, and it simply collapsed on that side and unceremoniously dumped them out at the side of the road. But the horses, responding to the efforts he had been making and their own weariness, were just coming to a halt.

His body broke the force of her fall, and she quickly scrambled to a sitting posture. He was dragged a short distance by the horses, but managed to regain his feet and bring them to a full stop. Then he turned to her.

"Oh, it was grand!" she cried, her eyes flashing and the color coming back to her cheeks.

"What was?" he asked in astonishment.

"The way you did it."

"Did what? Smashed a wheel to splinters and threw us both out?"

"But you brought us down that awful road with a broken brake," she insisted, still sitting by the roadside, "and—and this couldn't be helped. It was splendid."

This was a new kind of girl to him. Instead of thinking of her own bruises or of his, her mind was on his management of the horses in that thrilling and unexpected ride.

"Are you hurt?" he asked, quickly reverting to the question that had first come to his mind.

"Only a little shaken up," she answered. "But you're hurt." She got on her feet before he, hampered by

the horses, could assist her. "How blind of me!" she cried; "how thoughtless! Is your arm broken?" She came quickly to his side.

"Hardly," he answered, and he moved it by way of proof. "Cut a little, I guess, but that's all." His coat-sleeve was in ribbons, and the arm had been lacerated by the sharp stones.

Before he quite realized what was happening, he found that she had taken command, and that he, having tied the horses, was sitting on a bowlder, while she, kneeling beside him, was busy with the injured arm. Her touch was soft and caressing, her sympathy sincere, and he was decidedly sorry when it was finally bandaged. Then, as she rose, he saw that she was swaying dizzily. He had just time to catch her as she fainted.

It was only a momentary faint, but the canteen was handy, he was inexperienced in such matters, and the last of the water was trickling from her face when she awoke to the fact that she was lying with her head resting on his arm.

"You told me you weren't hurt," he said reproachfully, as she opened her eyes. "Lie still," he added, when she tried to get up. She did, for a moment, and then insisted upon sitting up.

"I wasn't hurt," she asserted. "I was shaken up pretty badly, and I'm bruised a little; but please remember that I've been two days under a hot sun and have had enough excitement and adventure to use up any girl who is not used to it. I'm all right again now, and you've got a big enough problem without thinking of me. What are we going to do? Pouring water down a girl's neck solves no problems."

He looked so crestfallen that she repented instantly and assured him that he had done exactly the right thing under the circumstances. Then they turned to the horses and the buckboard.

After a brief inspection, Hendon decided that there was only one thing to be done. He removed the broken harness from one of the horses, leaving

only the bridle. Then he got a blanket, folded it carefully, put it on the horse's back, and strapped it on with a piece of the harness. With a bit of rope he made a flexible handle that he attached to this strap.

"There!" he said, admiring his own ingenuity. "The blanket will keep you from slipping off too easily, and, if you sit back a little way, you can further steady yourself by the rope handle—like the girl in the circus."

"You don't expect me to get on the horse!" she exclaimed, aghast.

"I certainly do," he said.

"Well, I won't," she declared.

"Of course you will," he said confidently.

Here was a new attitude and a new tone. He was actually taking command—of her.

"I tell you, I won't," she insisted.

Then she meekly let him put her up, and, there being no stirrup, he found it necessary to lift her in his arms. It wrenched his injured arm, but that was a small price to pay for so great a luxury.

#### IV

HENDON and Miss Carne found that they were expected at the Juarez camp, and that something of their plight was suspected. The man who came forward to greet them did not seem to be greatly surprised.

"Something seems to have gone wrong," he remarked. "We feared as much when you failed to arrive."

"Failed to arrive!" repeated Hendon. "How did you know we were coming?"

"Oh, your guide has been here," was the explanation given. "He started back to look for you a little while ago. So we know something about you. You're Mr. Howard Hendon, and of course this is Mrs.——"

"Miss——" the girl began quickly.

"Oh, Miss Hendon," the man said before she could complete her sentence.

"Yes, Miss Hendon," said Hendon before she could speak again, and he gave her a significant look. This

would relieve them of the necessity of making any explanation of her real plight, so she silently acquiesced.

"Eduardo said 'senóra,'" the man explained.

"Oh, the dreadful Eduardo!" exclaimed the girl.

Then the man introduced himself as Anson Ford, the manager of the camp, and Hendon explained what had happened, while Mrs. Ford took charge of the girl. Ford agreed to send back for the buckboard and baggage, and he was confident the buckboard could be repaired in the little shop that he maintained for the repair of mining machinery. They would have to remain over another day, however, to enable this to be done.

Ford also was able to give Hendon about all the information he desired as to both the Juarez and the Alamo mines, having been in the district many years, and he agreed to take the subject up with him fully the following morning. Thus Hendon found his business likely to interfere little with his pleasure, which was to be escort to his "sister." Mrs. Ford said, after she had watched the girl dress and rebandage the young man's arm, that she never had known a brother and sister to be so deeply interested in such a prosaic matter.

At that particular moment, however, the girl was telling Hendon that she feared he had made a lot of trouble for her.

"How?" he asked.

"By making a sister of me," she answered.

"Oh, well," he returned lightly, "it's a lot better to begin by being a sister to a fellow than to end that way."

"But I'm serious," she insisted. "Of course, it saves a lot of explanation right now, but how about Alamo?"

"Why, I'll simply lose a sister between here and Alamo," he answered, "and Uncle John will gain a niece. That's easy enough."

"If none of these people ever get to Alamo," she suggested; "but it's only a day's journey"

"I hadn't thought of that," he re-

turned. "If they do you'll have to own up and explain."

"Which will be awkward," she sighed, "but there's no other way out of it."

"None, except——"

"What?"

"Except that you may not stay long at Alamo," he answered, which was not exactly what he had intended to say.

They were sitting on the porch of the little house, and Ford paused near them as he was entering.

"Hope you won't mind if we're a bit crowded tomorrow," he remarked. "John Carne of Alamo is coming up on a little matter of business."

Hendon heard the girl gasp.

"Uncle John!" she whispered, as Ford passed in. "What shall I do?"

"Stick it out," he answered. "You can explain to Uncle John at Alamo better than you can to the Fords here."

There seemed to be no better plan, but she was anxious and troubled. She and Hendon went over the placers the following morning, and watched the hydraulic dredge at work, but all the time she was dreading the arrival of her uncle in the afternoon. Yet this very dread seemed to draw her closer to Hendon; they shared this distressing little secret together, and upon no one else could she depend in any way.

Carne arrived late in the afternoon, but he was busy with Ford for some time, and they saw practically nothing of him until evening. His appearance was not prepossessing; he was a large red-faced man, with a scraggly beard, clothing that was shabby even for that country, and a blustering, overbearing manner. He was brutally frank in his comments on anything that came under his observation.

"Never been in the country before, judging by the clothes," was almost his first remark to the girl.

"It is my first visit," she admitted.

"Woman's a fool about dress, anyhow," he observed with the air of an autocrat passing judgment. "The more money she can put on her back the better she likes it. It's a wonder

to me that she don't wear diamonds in swimming." He laughed heavily at this sally. "If I had my way, I'd dress 'em all in bloomers. That 'ud cut down the expense some, I guess. Got to go into the business of trainin' a girl myself pretty quick," he added with a scowl.

"You don't seem to be delighted with the prospect," suggested Hendon.

"I ain't lost a girl, so why should I be tickled to find one," he returned. "A woman is a sort of display-window figure to advertise a successful man's fortune—at least, that's what she wants to be, and that's what she is when she gets a man whose fortune will stand advertisin'. When she don't, she holds it as a sort of personal grudge against the man that she does get. I tell you, most men are too blame easy with women. Get 'em down to bloomers and put 'em up against some of life's real work."

"Possibly somebody else might be willing to take her," remarked Hendon, with a quick glance at the girl.

"Huh!" grunted Carne, with a coarse laugh. "Show me the man!"

Hendon looked at the girl again. Her face was crimson and she was trembling with anger and humiliation. And John Carne rambled on, in his vulgar, insolent way, about woman.

Hendon had no chance to speak with her alone that evening, but he had ample opportunity to say what he wished the following day. Carne, having better horses, had gone on ahead, and Eduardo having penitently promised to put aside all other business, was leading the way on his pony. They had the repaired buckboard to themselves again. But Hendon discovered that it is not always easy to say a thing, even when you have decided what you want to say and how you want to say it.

"There is a stage-line from Alamo to Ensenada," was the way he finally began. "The stage leaves Alamo tomorrow morning and reaches Ensenada tomorrow evening."

"All of which I know," she answered. "There is also a steamer line from Ensenada to San Diego, and railroads

from San Diego to all parts of the country; but what good does that do me?"

"For the moment my thoughts did not go beyond Ensenada," he said.

"Ensenada doubtless is preferable to Alamo," she conceded, "but there is no uncle at Ensenada."

"There is no uncle at Ensenada," he repeated, "but there are ministers and priests and churches and magistrates."

She looked up at him quickly and their eyes met. After that it was useless to make even a pretense of not understanding him.

"I wouldn't let you carry your sympathy so far," she said.

"Sympathy!" he cried.

"Yes, sympathy," she repeated.

"You are naturally chivalrous, and you are sorry for me. You may not think it is sympathy, but you do not know."

"And you?" he asked. "Are you as ignorant, also?"

She hesitated. It was bitterly hard to repress an impulse to—what? Yield to him? Or escape Uncle John? How could she be sure of her real motive when Uncle John and all that he represented was so hateful to her? And she was too true a woman to give herself without her heart under any conditions.

"When I am sure of you I shall know about myself," she replied, rather enigmatically. Then she added, "We have known each other such a short time."

"Is it fair to measure by time?" he asked. "Why not by events? Then we have known each other long."

Which was true, but she chose to ignore it.

"And you would not want to be just an alternative to Uncle John," she said.

"No," he answered, "but I'd gladly take you any way you came, so long as it was willingly."

"When I know," she said, and refused to say more.

Yet, as they approached Alamo, there came a great feeling of sadness and depression. They would part at

Alamo. He would go on to Ensenada, and back to the world of brightness, and the light would go with him. She began to feel that more forcefully as she thought of the parting. Or was it only a desire to escape? No, she was thinking, not of the world, but of the man; she was thinking not of John Carne, but of Howard Hendon. But was she sure of him?

He was very persistent, very earnest in his efforts to convince her. It was a day of verbal sparring—sometimes in jesting vein, but more often in a serious way. They would talk of other things, but always they would get back to the stage that left in the morning for Ensenada.

"So I am to have no encouragement," he said at last.

"You may come back, if you have to go now," she told him.

"Do you ask me to come back?"

"No; but neither do I forbid it."

"You may not be here long."

"I may not."

"And if I find you?"

"I shall know you have not forgotten."

"That is little," he said gloomily.

"If it is little," she returned quickly, "do not come."

He drove along moodily. That was the nearest she had come to an encouraging hint, and there certainly was not much in that. Neither, if he had stopped to think, was there much to indicate steadfast purpose in what he had said. But there came to him now a wave of passionate determination. She suddenly felt the grip of one of his hands on hers.

"I am coming back," he said almost fiercely; "I am coming back, and, if you are not here, I will follow." She made a gentle effort to release her hand, but he would not let it go, and she was glad he would not.

"You may be right—not about me—I am sure of myself—but I do not want to be merely a refuge from Uncle John and Alamo. I want you to love me as I love you, and I am coming back—once, twice, a dozen times, until you are ready to go with me to



Ensenada and beyond, or I know there is no hope for me. I am coming back, Alice, coming back to make you believe and—love."

She looked searchingly, anxiously into his eyes for a moment, but did not speak.

Eduardo had reined up and was waiting for them beside the road.

"If the senor is going on tomorrow," suggested Eduardo, "it is well that I should reserve a place for him as we pass the stage office."

"Do so," instructed Hendon.

"One?" asked Eduardo, quite casually.

"Yes, one." He said it hesitatingly, regretfully.

Eduardo cantered on. Beneath the dust-robe Hendon still held the girl's hand, and he seemed to feel a slight, warm pressure now.

"One?" she whispered.

"Oh, Eduardo!" called Hendon, and there was the thrill of a glorious happiness in his tone. "Make it two!"

And then—fortunately they were entering upon a stretch of level road, and the horses went along just as if someone were driving.

It was three days before Uncle John heard, from Ensenada, what had become of the niece who had been shipped to him by Uncle Philip. And his only comment was, "Well, that let's me out."



## A LOVER OF THE WILD

By Clinton Scollard

ARE you a lover? Come!—  
A lover of wilding things!—  
The bee's low, haunting hum,  
The skyward whirring of wings;

Murmurs of reed and rush  
To the rill adventuring by;  
Out of the underbrush  
The cuckoo's shifting cry;

Bruised sassafras scent;  
The sweet-flag's tonic taste;  
The wind's cool instrument  
Wholly assailed of haste!

I would take your hand  
And lead you into the wild;  
There we should understand,  
Each like a little child.

And the loving mother-earth,  
Wise to the depths of her loam,  
She should cry out with mirth,  
"Here are my babes come home!"

## SACRIFICE

By Gustav Kobbé

“DIDN'T you know? Yet why should you? You were out of reach of all local news when it happened. But to think that his death should have been nothing more than 'local news'! Therein, my dear fellow, lurks the real tragedy. Read his last letter to me. He had just read my 'Dreamers' and wrote to congratulate me. Your mention of the book reminded me of it. Be sure to return it. I consider it unique. Don't you?”

And so he was dead, had been dead two years according to Graham, and I ignorant of it! But, as Graham said, it was local news, a paragraph tucked away in the obituary column and probably referring to him as “a frequent contributor to the magazines and Sunday newspapers,” and telling of what he died, but not mentioning one of those “frequent” contributions by title. Poor Archie! He was one of those free lances—who survive everything they write. His little nugget of reputation was buried with him, like the coins in ancient urn-burial to provide passage money for the journey to the borderland; if so, it was the only expense Archie ever was prepared to meet on a cash basis.

Where I had been—the wilds to which a mining expert's work is apt to take him at any time for an indefinite period—no news but of events that move the world ever penetrated and, even then, not until long after the world had ceased to move and settled back again to wait for another shock. Needless to say, Archie's death had not been a world-moving event, yet the fact that I was two whole years be-

hindhand in hearing about it did not deaden the shock to me. Indeed, I was signally unprepared for it, since, when I reached London, about a month before I received Graham's letter, and was looking over a file of American papers, I saw in one of those color-omelets known as “Sunday Sections” a humorous column signed by Archie and entitled “Husbands of Famous Prima Donni and Why They Did It.” It was a pathetic comment on his life, this funny column appearing two years after his death. Doubtless it was the fag end of a lot of Archie's “stuff” that some literary agent had left over. Yet it was “timely,” for the advertisement of the opening of the opera season was on the opposite page.

It was so like Archie to be “timely.” “Timeliness” was, in fact, his curse—the main reason why everything he wrote had been so ephemeral. He had reduced his work to a system. He was aware that certain fixed events, functions and entertainments recurred with unfailing regularity about the same time every year, and he prepared for them well in advance. In February he got his Horse Show stuff ready for the following November. In April, when the editors were planning their Christmas numbers, he would work over his stock feature, “Christmas in Many Lands,” throw in some new pictures and deal out the old deck to the latest syndicate—all the others having used it before. The “timely” string was attached to everything he wrote, and someone had pulled it even two years after his death and made his ghost dance in the humorous column.

If the souls of the dead are sensible of what happens on earth, how Archie must have groaned when he heard the presses grinding out "Husbands of Famous Prima Donni and Why They Did It." Of all the things he abominated most it was cheap humor, but it sold readily—and he had a wife and children, whom he adored, to support.

Archie was one of those men who begin their careers with some achievement full of promise, only to disappoint their friends and, worst of all, themselves. His obituary, according to Graham, said heart failure. I knew better. It should have been failure. When he was barely twenty-two, he wrote and sold a short story—"Ideals," it was called—a little tragedy of the artistic temperament that was a masterpiece of its kind. If he could have followed it up in due time with a dozen stories equally good, his reputation would have been made, and he might gradually have trained himself for the more sustained effort needed to produce a novel. But—he was too much in love to wait; and, on the strength of that one initial success, he married a refined and charming girl who, like himself, was penniless. He forgot that he had worked over that story for two months, writing and rewriting it, filing away at each sentence, until every word in the story was the right word in the right place, and that for that two months' work he had received about enough to live on for a fortnight.

Of course, there was to be no desperate need of money when Archie and Helen married. Oh, no, they would live in a garret and cook in a chafing-dish! But their garret turned out to be a charming little suite of rooms and their chafing-dish a fairly expensive hotel restaurant near by. I don't doubt they inspected a garret, and I don't doubt either that he saw the disconsolate look on Helen's face. There was no sacrifice he would not have been willing to make for his art, if he had been alone. But he was not alone now, and the one sacrifice he

couldn't make was to see her unhappy.

Well, as soon as they were settled he wrote another story. It was rejected by one magazine after another, it was so obvious a falling off from the first. He had written it too hurriedly. He was in desperate need of money now. There was only one way out of the predicament. He went—in fact, he was forced to go—on the staff of a daily newspaper as a reporter, and there he acquired that fatal facility for tackling any subject that came up and writing entertainingly, but only superficially, about it. Later, it is true, he worked himself out of the newspaper rut and into the periodicals. But here, too, he "handed out timely stuff," as he used to put it—stuff that obviously was suitable to occasion, and, being cleverly written, was quickly accepted and paid for. He had to write it, because he always was in need of ready money. He and Mrs. Archie had started the wrong way. She always wanted something a little better than he could afford to give her—and he always gave it to her. The result was that whenever money came in it was mortgaged long beforehand to landlord, butcher, grocer, dressmaker—very often, indeed, to the last; for Mrs. Archie was a pretty woman and always dressed becomingly. She called it "keeping up her looks for Archie," who meanwhile was dictating pot-boilers to a typewriter.

Once I remember, when I asked him what he was working on just then, he answered with a shrug:

"Oh, the same old thing. I'm what they call 'a trained writer.' I can write on any subject without anyone finding out that I don't know anything about it."

He spoke bitterly, which was rather unusual for him. Mrs. Archie looked up quickly. "Never mind, Archie," she said. "Don't get discouraged. Some day our boys will be in business and our girls married. Then you won't have to work so hard and you and I can take a dear little house somewhere in the country all by ourselves, and you

will have time to write all those fine things you have in your mind."

For answer he went over and stood beside her, and, placing a hand on her shoulder, looked down at her so tenderly that for me there was a world of pathos in his simple action. For, while there was unspeakable love in his look, it also was strangely wistful, as though he failed to discern that problematical "little house somewhere in the country" at the end of the vista, and realized—wondering she didn't—that he was in the prime of life and should be doing his best work then and there; and that, if the leisure she spoke of ever came, it would find him a worn-out hack. Yet all he said was:

"I am sure, dear, the best thing I ever will do will be a story with you for the heroine."

Outwardly, at least, save to the keen eyes of a friend like myself, he was reconciled to his failure, because she was the cause of it. But wasn't it a case of self-deception, after all? His bitter exclamation in my presence, that wistful look, and now his letter to Graham seemed to indicate that he was not wholly unconscious of the price he had paid for the privilege of waiting to put Helen into the story that never was written. It was like a voice from the grave, that letter!

DEAR GRAHAM:

How can I thank you for having sent me this early copy of your "Dreamers"? You know what the book means to me—how I fairly revel in everything you write! The tenderness, the delicate vein of psychology, the pathos, the tragedy in these pages, show how keenly attuned your ear is to the throb of the human heart. You have heard it and reproduced it here.

Can you, who have known me so long, not understand how strongly the title of the book appeals to me? "Dreamers!" Am I not at times the veriest dreamer of them all—a dreamer of beautiful dreams that never come true? My "Ideals," for example! When that was accepted and printed (so many years ago it seems to me now that it must have happened to some-

body else), did I not dream of triumphs such as yours?

But—you are a genius, while I am simply "timely." (Curse the word!) Once I thought I was a genius, but all that is past. Let me tell you how I discovered that I wasn't. A genius sacrifices everything to his art. Friends, wife, children—all these are as nothing to him compared with it. Their very unhappiness simply is so much material "from life" for his pen. Do you remember when I dropped in to see you and you told me your wife had left you? I began stammering condolences. You ripped a sheet off your pad, crumpled it and threw it into the wastebasket.

"That's all it amounts to—one blank page less in my life!" was your only comment. Then you told me you had just finished a story and you read it to me—your "Mirage." My dear Graham, unconsciously you had written up your unhappy experiences with your wife. She was the "Mirage." Even the phrase about the "blank page" occurred in it.

Well, I am not a genius. There isn't anything. Art with a capital A included, I wouldn't give up for Helen and our children. In fact, from your point of view, haven't I given up everything for them—everything, I mean, you and I valued when we were young and ambitious? But I have given it up for a woman's love, which is the greatest thing of all. Sometimes, it is true, I think of "Ideals" and dream of what might have been. But I always wake up before it is too late—you know I am so damned "timely"!

You might put me in a story and call it "Sacrifice." Only there must be no blank page about it, but one with Love—my love for Helen and hers for me—written all over it.

So long, old man,

ARCHIE.

This was the second time I had read the letter; and now I noticed a memorandum in pencil and in Graham's hand as a kind of postscript.

She married again six months ago, has a lot of new clothes and looks wonderfully smart and pretty. This time there will be no question of genius going to waste. He has none—only money. The children are beginning to call him "father." At least it isn't the old, familiar "Dad" with which they used to run to meet poor Archie. "Mirage!" "Sacrifice!" How about that blank page now?



## THE CASE OF JORGENS AGAINST STUBBS

By Ellis Parker Butler

WHEN I received the letter from Budd, Dewing & Co., the great publishers, telling me that they had decided to publish my novel, "The Sins of Biddleford Jorgens," my heart almost stood still. It seemed absolutely too good to be true. That I, an unknown author, should have my very first work accepted by the very first publisher to whom it was submitted, seemed, even to my inexperienced little self most phenomenal, and I was especially elated because the publisher was Budd, Dewing & Co., whose imprint on a novel seemed to guarantee immense sales.

In their letter they even ventured to predict that "The Sins of Biddleford Jorgens" would be the sensation of the year, and I need not say that the royalty terms they offered were fully satisfactory to me. They even agreed with my desire to publish the book under a pen-name. In fact, Mr. Dewing, who signed the letter, was most emphatically in favor of the idea.

He said the book was so thoroughly and completely masculine in idea and treatment that its success was the more certain if it appeared as written by a man, and that my name, Evylyn St. Cyr, was so unlike the contents of the book that it would be apt to give many readers a wrong idea of it and prevent them from taking up the book. He would suggest, he said, some crude, rough name, such as Bill Jones or John Stubbs, and that, finally, the house would keep the secret of my authorship absolutely inviolable.

The book was published and with the name of John Stubbs on the title-page, and it was an immediate success.

It really was the hit of the year, and was described as the first genuinely humorous romance of the twentieth century. John Stubbs was declared to be the successor to Mark Twain and the great humorists of the middle and late nineteenth century, and Biddleford Jorgens was lauded as being as virile and striking as Mark Twain's Colonel Sellers or Daudet's Tartarin of Tarascon.

To tell the truth, I, too, thought my Biddleford Jorgens a great character. Into him I had tried to put all the guile, trickery and unscrupulous brag of the worst type of modern industrial promoter, and by using my capacity for humor I succeeded in making my Biddleford Jorgens at once supremely ridiculous and supremely despicable. He became, immediately, a nationally accepted character and with the great circulation of the book, I doubt if there were many places where Biddleford Jorgens was not a familiar byword.

In July—the book was published in January—I received a letter from Budd, Dewing & Co. that stunned me. For two or three days, I remember, I locked myself in my room and lay on my bed trying to think, but all I could do was to listen to a silly refrain that insisted on running through my brain:

"Sing, sing, what shall I sing?  
Some little crinkety, crankety thing  
That rhymes and chimes, and skips sometimes,  
As though wound up with a kink in the spring."

I believe I was on the verge of insanity, or as near it as a perfectly sane person can be.

The letter had told me that Budd,



Dewing & Co., had received a communication from a lawyer in Chicago informing them that he was about to bring suit in behalf of his client against one John Stubbs, author of "The Sins of Biddleford Jorgens," and against Budd, Dewing & Co., to recover the sum of fifty thousand dollars damages on account of the injury done to his client's good name by the writing and publication of my book. His client's good name was Biddleford Jorgens!

Mr. Dewing wrote that he had written suggesting that the injury was unintentional, and that we were willing to change the name of the book and of its principal character, but that the lawyer had answered that the injury was already done; that his client had been an industrial promoter and was now a mere butt and laughing-stock because his name had been willfully used in my story.

I tried to think the matter over, but my brain refused to bite. It slid away from a logical consideration of the subject and insisted in repeating Riley's jingle, until I was almost mad.

The sensible thing would have been for me to take advice on the case, but how could I without telling that I was the author of the book? That I was resolved never to do—not, at least, for some years. I ended by writing Mr. Dewing, telling him to do what he thought best; that I was worn out and almost a nervous wreck, and that I was going up in the mountains somewhere where I should not hear of "The Sins of Biddleford Jorgens" or any other book.

I knew just where to go. Up in the Adirondacks I had spent several Summers with a dear old uneducated farmer and his dear old motherly wife, and there I went. I was the only boarder they ever had, and there was but one other house anywhere near, and it was so out of repair that no person would ever think of stopping in it.

As soon as I stepped from the car and saw dear old Daddy Simpson standing on the little station platform my cares fell away as if by magic, and as we drove up the mountain road and all my old familiar spots came in view, I forgot I

was the author of anything whatever. The bracing, cool air was so different from the hot stuffiness of the city, the long hillsides covered with trees so unlike the odorsome asphalt and brick walls of my street, that my dull spirits arose in an ecstasy of freedom.

Daddy told me all about "Spotty," the cow, and explained at length how she had miraculously recovered from a colic, after the veterinary had given her up for gone; told me how ma was and had been, and so filled me up with the good, small life of the farm that there was no room in me for care or worry or anything but deep breaths of pure joy.

As we turned the corner by the big elm, and the little farm-house came into view Daddy turned to me anxiously.

"Ma said," he began cautiously, "that I had better tell you about buildin' an L on the house. Ma thought I had better say so 'fore you got home, quite. She thought mebby you wouldn't like the shock to come too sudden on you."

I looked at him to see if he was twinkling, as he twinkled when telling a bit of fun, but he was not.

"Oh, that is nice," I said.

"Yes," he said. "Yes, we can use the room quite handy. I'm sure glad you don't mind, Miss Evy."

He paused and then said hastily: "We got another boarder in that L, Miss Evy."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, with a long-drawn, regretful, unavailing sigh, and then, seeing his shamed-faced condition, I remembered that they had a perfect right to have as many boarders as they pleased, and I added cheerfully, "I'm sure she will be nice."

"She's nice, all right," Daddy twinkled, "only she ain't a she, she's a he."

"A man!" I cried, reproachfully.

"Oh, Daddy!"

"Now, Miss Evy," Daddy half-begged, half-coaxed, "you'll git along with that man-boarder. You won't scarce see him. He's away all day. And he is nice."

"What is he?" I asked.

"Well—" drawled Daddy, "he's a man. And, as near as I can make out,

he's a gentleman. I dunno what his line o' work might be. Never asked him and he never happened to say. His name," said Daddy, "is the only funny thing about him. He goes by the name of Jorgens."

"Jorgens!"

I must have screamed it. Daddy jumped fully an inch off his seat.

"Why, yes," he admitted reluctantly. "That's it, for a fact. Jorgens, Biddleford Jorgens."

"Not *Biddleford* Jorgens!" I gasped, and I fell into a fit of hysterical laughter so boisterous that Daddy had to lay a restraining hand on my arm. Otherwise I should have laughed myself off the wagon seat.

Presently I stopped and wiped my eyes, from which the silly tears were fairly streaming. I was very sober quite suddenly.

"Daddy," I said, "you must turn this wagon around and take me right back to the station! Don't go another inch!"

Daddy looked at me quizzically.

"Now, Miss Evy," he said, glancing at the deep gully that edged the road on one side, and the steep hillside that rose at the other, "I hate to turn 'round right here, I do. I'd do most anything for you, but how to turn this rig 'round right here beats me. We might get out and lift the hosses back over the wagon, an' then turn the wagon over, but I dunno any other way. That's a fact!"

"You can drive until you get to a wider stretch," I said, "but then you must positively turn!"

"Surely!" Daddy agreed. "Jest as you say, Miss Evy. But there ain't a train you could git, either way, until this time tomorrow, and you might as well put up at our house over night as sleep in the depot."

"I wouldn't sleep in the same house as that man—" I began, but even as I said it I knew I should stay the night at the farm at least. There was nothing else I could do.

"Well, now," said Daddy soothingly, "I guess if that's all that's the matter we'll git rid of that man soon

enough. Me and ma won't let any man drive *you* away, Miss Evy. I'll see that he packs up and gits the fust thing to-morrow, come sun up."

I was touched to think the good old man thought enough of me to do it, but I would not have allowed him to do such a thing for all the wealth in the world.

"No! No!" I cried. "You must not do that, Daddy. You must not say a word to him. Don't even mention me to him. Don't say anything to him at all."

The idea that Biddleford Jorgens should be chased away from this quiet mountain retreat on my account was more than I could bear. It was enough that I had rendered his life unbearable. I must not drive him away. I could not bear to think of myself as an undeserved Nemesis, tracking him down in this cruel manner.

"Just let me slip into the house quietly, Daddy," I begged, "and stay in any old room until morning, and then I will go away again. You will, please, won't you?"

"Surely!" Daddy agreed. "You own this house whenever you come, Miss Evy. Whatever you want you can do it, and if ma says a word I'll—" he paused to find a sufficient dire threats and ended, "I'll put a toad in her butter jar!"

As we drove up to the little pile of three rough stone steps that stood at the edge of the road before the house, Ma Simpson, in her best calico gown, came hurrying across the lawn to meet me, and—horror of horrors!—just behind her strode that man!

I could feel my face crimson. I almost expected him to shake a fist in my face and denounce me as a heartless, cruel life-wrecker. I was so guiltily conscious that I forgot that he did not know that I was the author of the book and of his troubles, and it was in a half-witted maze that I received and returned Ma Simpson's kiss of greeting, and heard her introduce Mr. Biddleford Jorgens. I suddenly became conscious that I was staring at him stupidly and that he was smiling at me and saying pleasant things about

the mountains and the air and the day itself.

"I feel like an interloper, Miss St. Cyr," he was saying, "since Mrs. Simpson tells me this has so long been your private possession. I really did not know it when I came. If I am an interloper I am an easily dislodged one and the least hint will make me vanish."

I tried to make my face tell a fib and say he was not an interloper. I think I screwed up some kind of a sickly smile.

"Oh, no!" I said. "Quite the contrary."

I suppose I should have gone on inanely, like a well-trained child, saying, "Much obliged, if you please, thank you," if he had not interrupted me to help me from the wagon.

"I'm glad of that," he said, "because I like the place so immensely that it would quite do me up to have to go away."

We were walking toward the house and he turned to me quickly.

"You caught my name, didn't you?" he asked with cruel suddenness.

"Name?" I stammered. "Your name? Yes."

Again I felt the red flood my face, and he saw it too. He smiled scornfully.

"Then you know why I came up here," he said. "You have read the book?"

"Yes," I faltered, and my knees grew weak beneath me. "But—but I don't believe— That is, I understand."

"No, you don't," he said kindly.

"Of course I don't blame you nor anyone else, for feeling that way about me, after reading that book. I can understand that people must think it is some sort of a biography. But the strain was a little too much for me at first. A fellow hates to be laughed at, and pointed out, and taken as part of the joke. You can understand that. You can see that I wanted to get away somewhere where no one had even heard of the book."

"Of course," I murmured.

"And this is the place!" he laughed gaily. "I came up here to give my self-respect a respite from the strain it was having. I needed time to let the rawness of the effect the book was having wear off. I wanted to be where no one had ever heard of Biddleford Jorgens and his funny sins, and now—now I am glad that you have read the book and that you are here."

He paused to let me appreciate this, not knowing, of course, that every word he said cut right into the soul of me.

"Because," he continued, "I have to face the thing down some time, and the sooner I begin the better. You represent the world, and I can have a little practice in getting the world used to me, and getting myself used to the world's new view of me. I can welcome you heartily."

He was charming about it, and in a moment I saw it would never do for me to run away. I owed him that and much more. I foresaw that it might be hard for me to bear my part of the acquaintanceship, but it would be infinitely cruel to him if, by running away, I tore his self-respect to bits and trampled on them. As the author of the book I owed him what reparation I could give. So I told him to put my trunk in my room. I did not see Biddleford Jorgens again until dinner.

"Miss St. Cyr," he said then, "I don't want you to think I am a coward because I am hiding up here. It is because I am a sensible man of the world. You say you have read the book. Did you read it carefully?"

"Carefully?" I repeated. "Oh, yes, very carefully."

"I mean," he insisted, "did you read it with sufficient care to study its literary style; with sufficient care to judge of its real quality! What I mean," he said, inclusively, "is whether you read it critically enough to judge whether it would be a permanent addition to literature or only one of the momentary fads, like most popular tales?"

"I tried to judge it in that way," I said, feeling quite safe behind my incognito. "For reasons of my own I tried to think as poorly as possible of it, but the criticisms all say it is real literature."

He smiled.

"Wrong," he said, dogmatically. "Dead wrong! If I am any judge of books, it will be one of these short-lived, whooping successes and will be as dead as a salted mine inside of a year."

I shook my head slowly in a pronounced negative.

"Yes," he insisted. "I'll tell you why. It is a humorous book—all humor. The leading character is the only character that amounts to anything at all. The rest are mere lay figures. Now, a humorist must keep writing in order to sustain a first success, otherwise his work is the most quickly forgotten of all writings."

"I can't think that," I ventured meekly.

"It is true," he declared. "Absolutely true! And, now, my point. That fellow Stubbs is evidently a promoter himself. He knows the business, and he knows its tricks and its humors, but he has written himself out in that one book. People will wait six months, a year, perhaps two years, for a new book by Stubbs, and Stubbs will be trying to accommodate them, but he will fail. He will find that he is a bursted bubble, a squeezed sponge. I'll venture to say that at this minute he is sweating blood, trying to do another book, and tearing up what he writes as soon as the ink is dry. There will be no more of Stubbs. Stubbs is already a dead horse. Stubbs is on the road to oblivion, and deserves to be."

I did not dare to answer him lest I burst into a fiery torrent of denial that would unmask me.

"I know how soon even the greatest scandals are forgotten. A man who has secured a scandalous divorce goes abroad, and when he returns in two years, his name is clear of the stain to all but his intimate friends.

In a year or so Biddleford Jorgens will suggest nothing. The book will be forgotten. I will be doing business."

"I hope you will be doing business," I agreed.

"I will be," he said with supreme assurance. "So you see I am not a coward, merely a student of mankind and mankind's poor memory. To prove that I am not a coward I will tell you something that I have told no one but my lawyer. I am not flying from Stubbs; I have brought suit for damages against Stubbs. I mean to fight the case to the court of the last resort to vindicate my name, if need be. I do not need nor care for the money damages, but the vindication, such as it is, I shall insist upon."

"If you hope the book will be forgotten," I ventured, "isn't bringing suit a poor way to hasten the forgetfulness?"

Mr. Jorgens smiled.

"Revenge is worth a little inconvenience," he said. "But even if it does prolong the agony a week or so, it is more than worth it to me to be even with that fellow Stubbs."

"How you hate Stubbs!" I exclaimed.

"If I had that beast here," said Mr. Jorgens, "I would wring his neck for him. Yes, I would," he insisted, seeing my smile. "I know the kind of fellow he is—small man, large bulby forehead, spectacles with gold rims and a deferential smile!"

I was glad that Mrs. Simpson changed the subject to farm matters.

After supper we sat on the little front porch. Mr. Jorgens sat on the step and I had a better opportunity to study him than my nerves had yet allowed me. He was a good type of American, broad, clean and self-reliant. That he should hide here in the mountains seemed to show how thoroughly he had been hurt by the ridicule of the book, but whenever I found myself feeling sorry for him I came back with a jerk to the realization of my own entire

innocence of any intentional wrong, and to a combative temper. After all, he was the man who was to sue me for fifty thousand dollars! It was a most unpleasant complication of feelings.

I tried to make talk of books, but Biddleford Jorgens knew nothing of any book but one, and he would not talk of anything else. I knew he had good reason to hate that book, but it was hard for me to sit still and hear him tear it to pieces. He ridiculed it and told me the uncomplimentary things his friends had said about it—to appease his wounded spirit, I suppose—and finally he insisted on getting the book and reading me a few passages that he thought were especially silly and inane, and he positively demanded that I should admit they were as bad as he said. I finally had to plead a headache and go to my room to escape his insistence.

The next day he was at me again as soon as we met at breakfast.

"Miss St. Cyr," he said, "Mrs. Simpson told me last night that you write a little yourself. I won't insult you by asking you if you know this low fellow Stubbs, for that would be to suggest that you might know him, and I know you do not, but I want to ask you if you ever heard of him before you saw his book?"

I was able to say I had not.

"Let's not talk about him," I cried gaily. "Let's forget Stubbs."

"I wish I could," he replied, "but I can't. What I want to know is whether you know anything about him. Do you?"

I considered what I should answer.

"Yes," I said thoughtfully, "I do know him. Quite well—very well indeed. Intimately."

"Good!" he cried. "Now—honestly—didn't I describe him exactly last night?"

"No!" I said hotly, "not in the least particular. Mr. Stubbs is——"

"Is he a gentleman?" asked Mr. Jorgens.

I hesitated

"No," I said slowly, and I had to smile; "he is more of a lady."

Mr. Jorgens laughed.

"One of the sissy kind, is he?" he laughed. "What did I say? Now, I'll wager you anything you want that his name isn't Stubbs!"

He looked at me so quizzically that I almost trembled where I sat. I did not dare to look him in the eyes, but made myself busy with my plate.

"Right again," he laughed. "I'll tell you why I knew it. The sissy kind never wear names like John Stubbs. I'll make another wager that he didn't choose the name himself. His publisher did it. If he was choosing he would have been an Algernon Vere de Vere, or a Percy Montmorancy."

My face must have shown something, for he paused suddenly.

"Miss St. Cyr," he said kindly, "I beg your pardon. Is Mr. Stubbs now your friend?"

"He is, Mr Jorgens," I said firmly. "He is the best friend I have. We are—inseparable."

From that moment Biddleford Jorgens seldom mentioned Stubbs or my book. On the contrary, he avoided the subjects scrupulously, and when I ventured to broach them he changed the topic immediately. But he seemed, so far as appearances went, to think no less of me because I claimed the mythical John Stubbs as my friend. Indeed, I could hardly understand why he paid me so much attention.

In every way Biddleford Jorgens tried to make himself agreeable to me. He proposed tramps up the mountain; he took me driving behind Daddy Simpson's amiable mare; he hardly left me time to sleep and eat, and he even initiated me into the mysteries of his beautiful blue-steel rifle. I was puzzled until, quite incidentally, as he tried to make it appear, he asked whether John Stubbs was married, and, when I said he was not, whether he was engaged to be married. You can judge how



friendly we had become by that time. It flashed upon me then that Biddleford Jorgens was pursuing his revenge. He was trying to supplant John Stubbs in my affections—if John Stubbs was there—or in my friendship if he was there. I was tempted to say that I was engaged, but I did not. I merely said John Stubbs was not. I think Biddleford Jorgens was disappointed. His revenge would have been greater if John Stubbs and I had been affianced—so he thought.

That night I lay awake long thinking of this great discovery. I will not deny that I had come to like Biddleford Jorgens very well, and the discovery of his motive at once humiliated and angered me. All my regret, all my sympathy disappeared. When, at length, I fell asleep it was with a resolve to give him as good as he gave.

I was careful when I next met Biddleford Jorgens, which was at breakfast, and I accepted his invitation for a drive through the intervals with all the appearance of gratitude that I could command; and I was amused during the drive to notice how charmingly attentive he was. Not lover-like, for our intimacy had hardly gone so far, but very, very friendly—the affectionate-friendly, chummy sort of thing. And I paid him in kind. I was a very pleasant companion on that ride, and I suppose he gloated over what he thought was a sign of yielding to his blandishments. I could afford to be nice—I was saving myself fifty thousand dollars.

My plan was simple and I had considered it carefully, and I could see no flaws in it whatever. I relied on Biddleford Jorgens and John Stubbs. I knew that Biddleford Jorgens would press his friendship as far as he dared without actually posing as a lover—for he was too manly to take his revenge on me by dropping me after he had, as he supposed, won my heart. I meant to make him go farther than he intended or, at least, I could pretend that I thought he meant more than he did. A woman can do that—it is her prerogative. And then, when he would

see me crushed and hurt at finding he did not love me, I could ask him anything, and I would tell him about John Stubbs—that John Stubbs was one of my family—and beg him to discontinue his suit for damages. If I knew anything of men, I was sure that Biddleford Jorgens would not refuse me. His contrition for having made friends with me, his confusion at my tears, everything would be in my favor.

Of course I would not have made love to him boldly and brazenly just to save the money, immense as the amount was to me, but I was only playing his game. I had a perfect right to trump his ace, to turn his own batteries upon him. Ask any woman!

We played the little comedy very prettily. It was quite like the real thing, and I dare say he lay awake at night deciding just how far he would go next day. I know I did. I planned accidental hand touches as carefully as I had planned the situations in my book, and once I even got out of bed and lighted my lamp to practise an effective surprised glance that I had thought of. I wanted to see if it expressed the mingling of surprise and delight that I wished. It did, perfectly. I wanted to try the little involuntary cry that was to accompany it, but his room was so near mine that I did not dare. I was afraid he might hear me prematurely.

We got on famously up to a certain point and then we stuck there. He was acting the "trembling-on-the-verge-of-love" business, and I could not, without seeming bold and forward, grab him and drag him forcibly over the verge, much as I longed to. It seemed necessary for the success of my plan that he should be over the verge, but a whole week went by and he remained carefully balanced. Like the circus, his actions "contained nothing that the most fastidious could object to." I decided that he did not mean to go a step further, and that I must make the best of what I already had.

I chose a most delightful afternoon when we were to tramp up to Goblin's Head. The path was full of stones and

I decided that the best thing to do was to sprain my ankle so badly that he must carry me down. Out of such a situation I could evolve all I needed, for to carry me he must use his arms, and I could upbraid him for his coldness, and I would be fittingly helpless and womanly and all that.

We started briskly, for I like a brisk climb, and twice he told me to be more careful in the way I hurried over the loose stones. I could hardly keep from laughing at him, he was falling into the snare so easily. Once I actually fell, but I was stupid enough to jump up again, just because the spot wasn't as romantic as the one I had chosen, and then he fell behind and I had to wait for him so that he would be on hand for the grand catastrophe.

It came off as scheduled. I stepped on the loose round stone, and fell on the mossy bank with a cry of pain, but instead of picking me up he told me to tear off a strip of my petticoat, and he looked the other way while I did it. Then he soaked it in the ice-cold stream at the side of the path, and made me take off my shoe and bind that horribly cold bandage around my ankle. He said I must sit still for an hour or two hours because nothing was worse for a sprained ankle than walking on it! So I sat!

From time to time he asked me if the pain was any less, and I told him, each time, that there was no change, and he fidgeted around, walking back and forth, and sitting down and getting up again. I was bound I would sit there until he got ready to carry me home, and he was resolved to wait until I was able to walk! At least I thought so. And he insisted on giving me fresh cold bandages every few minutes.

"I hate to sit here," I said at length. "I wish I was home."

"You do!" he exclaimed, and I believe he was actually surprised. "Now, I like it. You are such a self-sufficient young lady that it is a treat to be able to do something for you."

"What?" I asked scornfully. "Wet this rag for me once every hour or so? Thank you!"

"No," he said gravely; "to do anything. Wetting that rag is only a symbol. I would like to do anything for you."

He stood directly in front of me and looked straight into my eyes.

"I love you, Evylyn," he said.

I could feel the hot glow thrill through me from my forehead until it met the icy bandage on my ankle. I caught my breath quickly.

"Oh!" I said, and he repeated his words just as he had said them before. I knew he meant it and my eyes dropped. He bent over and, putting his hand under my chin, lifted my face until I looked into his eyes.

"You love me, too," he said confidently. "Don't you?"

Somehow I forgot all about my plan, and about everything else but the big, strong man before me.

"Yes," I answered obediently.

My ankle got much better immediately and we were able to go on up to Goblin's Head, but of course he had to help me a great deal, and when we reached the Head we sat down and I made him keep still while I thought it over, for it had come so suddenly that I was dazed.

"But—" I cried suddenly, and then I stopped. I could not call him Biddleford. My heart revolted from it, and I could not call him Mr. Jorgens. "But," I began, "but, dear, I can't marry you if your name is Biddleford Jorgens. I can't! It would be too ridiculous!"

"Evylyn!" he exclaimed reproachfully; "surely you don't—"

"No, no!" I said. "Not that! Not as other people mind it. But you don't know. I *couldn't* be Mrs. Biddleford Jorgens, I *couldn't*."

"Very well," he said heartily, "I don't know why you can't, but if you can't, you shall not be. That is easily fixed. I can have my name changed. I'll have the legislature change it."

I let him kiss me for that.

"But—" I began again, and he laughed.

"Another one?" he taunted.

"Yes," I said. "If you change your name you can't sue—you can't sue John Stubbs. Because you won't be Biddleford Jorgens!"

"All right," he agreed, "John Stubbs can go scot free for all I care. I've got you; I don't need him."

And then I had to drag up all the courage I had in me, from the very tips of my toes to the crown of my head, and I reinforced it by—no matter what, but he liked it.

"But you have got John Stubbs," I said, as fast as I could say it. "I'm John Stubbs! I wrote that book! I did! Me! Evylyn St. Cyr! I wrote it!"

The blankness of his face was comical for a moment, and then as my meaning dawned on him he sighed one big sigh and laughed.

"The dickens you did!" he exclaimed and added, most inconsistently, "Well, I always said it was a mighty good book."



## SOMETIME

By Aloysius Coll

SOMETIME, when in the hushes of the night,  
 You grow afraid, then laugh away the fear  
 That on the stair a step had fallen light.  
 Look up and smile—you cannot see or hear,  
 But I am near!

Sometime, when breezes stir across the wall,  
 You startle at the rustle of a vine  
 And break your lips to speak, but choke the call—  
 Give me the word—'tis not the columbine;  
 The voice is mine!

Sometime, when in the passing of a cloud  
 You tremble at the shadow, yet are brave,  
 Lift up your eyes—this thing so like a shroud  
 My soul is, come to pay the love you gave  
 Back from the grave!



FIRST BABY—You look sad.

SECOND BABY—I am. I feel keenly the responsibility of having parents who cannot afford to have me.

## THE LONGING

By Herbert D. Ward

THE Rev. James Addison was almost too handsome a man for a minister. Perhaps he would have failed in any other denomination than the one he chose. A church whose sole creed consists of "God is," may find itself not adverse to having a clean-cut, well-groomed man to demonstrate this particular faith.

James Addison was not quite the gentleman he seemed to be. He was esthetic without culture. He was theological without logic, and he was handsome without refinement.

Seen at a distance at this time of his life, his beauty was startling. He was tall and broad. His hair was black and wavy, and fastidiously brushed. Beneath was an intellectual, full white forehead, and unexpected blue eyes. His nose was straight, and a little too large at the nostrils. Perhaps his mouth was his finest feature. It was sensitive, impressive; his mustache had been carefully cut away, and the outline of his lower lip was well revealed. His chin was strong and clean, with a cleft in its centre.

But, seen near to, his chin bagged at the throat, showing a vacillation of feeling; his lips were too parted in repose, indicating indecision of character; his skin was coarse, reporting to the close observer an abruptness of temperament that might not always be comfortable to live with, and his eyes spread a little at the focus, giving one the quick impression either of distrust, or that the Rev. James Addison was not as satisfied with his lot as a man ought to be who preaches at a

fashionable salary the peace of God that passeth all understanding.

The ladies of Mr. Addison's semi-religious, semi-aristocratic congregation were always envying their pastor's wife her husband, and never overlooked an opportunity surreptitiously to press his hand, and to give him the look of comprehending pity. Nor was James Addison well-bred enough to resent this vulgar and ancient form of adulation. What he craved was to be understood. This conjugal duty Martha Addison, his wife, did not perform to his satisfaction. Perhaps she understood him too well.

The apposition of a name to a nature is one of the interesting accidents of baptism. One often says of an acquaintance, "Her name fits her like a glove." A Rachel, an Alice, a Katherine—these are indicative each of its own type.

Intuition must have presided at the christening of Martha Addison; for any other Christian name would have been a sarcasm in her instance. Mrs. Addison was short, fat, near-sighted and busy. She was a terror to servants and dirt. She was one of the women who make their husbands uncomfortably comfortable, and miserably happy. She had descended from a notable line of housekeepers, and was proud of it.

The housekeeper and the homemaker are two different breeds, and rarely found in one. Mrs. Addison kept her home because it could not get away from her, and her husband because he was a Christian minister, and a paid pattern to the community.

It was fortunate for Mr. Addison that he had elected a denomination which might as easily have worshiped Buddha as God; for his wife—chiefly through her domestic ambitions—never allowed her husband time enough to himself to produce anything but a discourse in which feeling took the place of thought, and illustration that of study.

They had now been married for fifteen years, and had arrived at that critical period when the love that grows from mutual concessions and the camaraderie that is mortised by mutual experience are absolutely necessary to prevent the rift that may widen at a frightfully accelerating speed. At forty, the average couple married are either indissolubly bound together, or are in the process of a repulsion that ends sooner or later in marital disaster.

A wife without a child is always at a disadvantage when she pays more attention to her house than she does to her husband. That floating and fawning bevy of women who are eager for an esthetic sensation with a handsome and unhappy man have no corroding responsibilities to eat out the friendship entered upon without the home.

The wife has the further disadvantage of knowing her husband better than anyone else does. Possibly Mrs. Addison was the one woman in the congregation who was not thrilled by the minister's high-sounding periods: for had not the Rev. James Addison told her exactly what he thought of her in a fierce whisper just before he stepped into the pulpit? He wanted comfort, and she kept the flies out of his house. He wanted to be understood, and she gave him a perfectly cooked dinner. He wanted to be eternally coddled and caressed, and she swept the dust up into his face. He longed for admiration, and she briskly ignored his good looks, perhaps really underrated his mental powers.

In other words, the Rev. James Addison was not happy. To him the solemn sacrament, upon which he discoursed with eloquent emphasis in the pulpit, was a dismal failure. For years it had been dawning upon him that he

had made a mistake in asking the daughter of his landlady, at college, to be his wife; and now he was sure of it. She ought to have known enough to marry an Institution, and he ought to have been wise enough to wed a kindred soul.

Every man craves in his wife that good fellowship, that sharing of one's fun as well as one's joy, of one's disappointments as well as one's sorrows, that is found in a college classmate. A man is all expectant. His wife must combine the qualities of a housekeeper, entertainer, figure-head, mother and chum. She must have a perfectly served dinner, must nurse her child, and at the same time be prepared to share her husband's vices, and applaud his virtues. If she fail in any one of these particulars, the man considers himself defrauded at the marriage mart, and begins to pity himself and sulk. Whether he gives an adequate return for all this perfection is not the question at all. He is the woman's overlord, and what is there which his highness may not expect!

The Rev. James Addison seethed with some such thoughts as these. His wife was ungainly, and violated his esthetic taste. She was masterful, and she offended his masculine superiority. She was able, and she disclosed to him his weakness. This he never forgave her. She made him comfortable in spite of himself, and this fact exasperated him in proportion as his loyalty to her slipped away from him. But what angered him more than anything else was a little thing. It was this.

Mrs. Addison was large and bulky. She was short and stout, and yet she moved about the house with a rapidity that disconcerted her husband. She was here and there and everywhere, and Mr. Addison, as we have said, felt it impossible to be by himself.

The good woman did not realize that the ordinary man as well as the extraordinary man needs to be alone at times to rehabilitate his mentality. She loved her husband with absolute devotion, without respecting his higher nature. To her he was always the col-



lege lad, the college boy, who had taken her off her feet, and his surprisingly successful and fashionable pastorate was to her only an incident in a variegated career.

One morning at breakfast time, Mrs. Addison informed her husband that he could not go into his study that day, as she was about to clean it. It was Spring. The sun shone mellow on the bright grass, and his waffle melted in his mouth. These facts alone should have disarmed criticism, and made him joyous in spite of a temporary discomfort. But his heart crystallized within him. His eyes, which his wife in an ecstasy of girlish adoration had years ago called "Summer lakes of liquid blue," hardened upon her. His jaws locked with a ferocity that transformed his striking face into that of a revengeful day-laborer's.

"It is one thing today and another tomorrow," he shot out. "I am tired of this everlasting cleanliness! My professor of theology did not allow his study to be cleaned for three years. He locked his wife out. Give me dirt! I am maddened by having my house turned into a housekeeper's museum. I can't move but you follow me around with a dustpan and brush, and if I can't have a little more dust and comfort, we might as well begin to live our lives apart."

"Why, James!" gasped Mrs. Addison, looking at him severely, as a teacher would at an unruly boy. "I am surprised at you—and *you* a Christian minister!"

"I'm not as Christian as I might be," the Rev. James Addison interjected; his sense of humor overcoming his imagined wrongs.

But Mrs. Addison was not mollified.

"Is there another house in the city so well kept as yours? Is there another table served so well as yours at twice the money? If I say it myself, you live in a—I won't say a faultless house, but as near to it as I can manage on our income, and I am wearing myself to the bone to provide it for you."

The lady went on with greater severity:

"I don't believe there is another man in the world who shows as little appreciation of a well-kept house as you do. You ought to see how they compliment me at the mothers' meeting."

"Why do *you* attend a mothers' meeting?" asked Mr. Addison, brutally.

"They asked me to be chairwoman at the last monthly meeting, and I brought them all over here to show them what real old-fashioned house-keeping meant. And they said—"

"I don't care a—hang what they said!" James Addison, who had been several times at the point of bursting into laughter, pounded the table so hard that the dishes rattled, and rose from his seat.

"Before God, I am tired of this house business! What I want is a home."

It was at this time that the Rev. James Addison made the acquaintance of Estella Lake.

Miss Lake was not a member of his church, nor of his congregation. She was one of that vast battalion of artistic bohemians who have a home which they ignore and a studio that serves as a blind for game. She was of the kind that graduates from brothers and life classes at the same time. Every now and then, under the stimulus of a new friendship, she would paint a picture for exhibition, and generally it was refused.

Estella Lake was the type of girl that appropriates every man she likes, and then makes him comfortable. It was natural that this pseudo-artist should be the very antipodes of the minister's wife. Whatever Martha Addison abhorred Estella Lake excelled in.

When Mr. Addison met her one rainy afternoon at one of those silly private views of unsalable pictures, from which American art suffers all things, and gains—what?—she was sunk in a fluffy billow of eiderdown cushions, and looked too lazy to move.

When the minister lowered his eyes to her the passion of the lotus-eater took possession of him, and when this handsome man bent above her, Estella's pulse ran riotous with the thought

of a new conquest, and the subject of a new masterpiece blurred her brain.

From her tangled hair to her well-shaped foot, Estella Lake had not a straight line in her. Her eyes rested like a caress upon her caller, and she could not help giving the impression to the most virtuous man of being always in dishabille.

She was neither tall nor short, thin nor plump, nor was she particularly handsome. Nor were her features such as one would recall at midnight waking. She was the incarnation of ease, and the men who came to see her thought little, said less, and talked more.

Into that dimly-lighted zone of indolence the Rev. James Addison drifted with alacrity. When he entered Estella's presence and cast himself on an easy-chair beside her and looked upon her reclining luxuriously on her couch, he felt that he had taken a potent sedative. His wife, his house, his church, his cares seemed utterly wiped out of existence. For the first time in his life he was at once pleasantly relaxed, and mysteriously stimulated.

By the first of the Summer James Addison had become an habitué of Estella Lake's studio. Daily between three and five o'clock in the afternoon she was artist enough to deny herself to all other callers. The denizens of that studio building were not religious people, and few, if any, recognized the minister as he slipped in and out.

There she lay on her soft divan impatiently waiting for him, and when he entered and dropped the catch and shut the door, she greeted him with a warm and happy smile. What did he care about heathen in her presence? The worry as to whether a new family would enter his congregation, or an old pew-holder would leave the church, eluded him in that darkened atmosphere which hid the grime so necessary to the painter, and dulled the stuffiness into an esthetic glamour.

From dim-stained walls semi-nudes and flesh-tints laughed at him, offering a happy and alluring contrast to the stern engravings of Luther and of Calvin

that flanked his study walls. To him the very spots upon her dress were a rest, and he looked upon her riotous hair as a triumph of the femininity he had so long craved.

After a month of daily companionship, Estella Lake ventured, with charming deftness, to mix a cocktail, and begged him to share the strange drink with her. The Rev. James Addison was at first feverish because of this descent from his high ideals, and then he was feverish because of the cocktail.

Another time, a little while after, she took from her pocket an exquisite cigarette-case, and begged him to excuse her for the weakness. His gallantry led him to light the match, and before he knew it he was smoking with her, feeling like an emancipated school-boy.

"I don't see," he said one day, sipping his regular cocktail and inhaling the Turkish tobacco luxuriously, "why you have never married. You would make an ideal wife for a man. You are just what he wants. There is not a thing a fellow would not be willing to share with you in his own life. You are so attractive, and so restful."

Estella Lake looked at the minister curiously. He was such a handsome man, and just an unsophisticated boy. To exploit him, to rule him, and undermine him had been her greatest joy among a number of experiences. Often it had been diamond cut diamond. Once in a while she had been scorched. This man had eagerly confided in her his woes, and he was plaster-of-paris in her well-manicured fingers.

"If there were only one man in the world," she answered gravely, "I would not marry him. Do you suppose I should want to lose him?"

James Addison did not exactly know what she meant, but he felt that it was a compliment to the sex, if not to him, and from that moment he pursued his friendship for her with greater freedom. Somehow or other, a man, whether he is married or single, has a luxurious feeling of ease with a woman who does not look upon marriage favorably. Addison—who could say why?—had

no longer the worry upon his conscience lest Estella should fall in love with him, and he was pleasurably willing to drift where the current took him.

It was natural since he thought he found real life elsewhere, that he should drive further and further away from his wife. As has been intimated, Addison was a veneer; in certain respects a highly-polished one. In the world that he had made for himself, this had passed for the real substance. His personal attractions had always been a gratification to the female members of his different congregations, and his preaching had tickled the attention, without stimulating the consciences of the men. Thus he had passed from one popularity to another.

His wife used to say to herself in extenuation, "I suppose I ought to bear with him at home, if others like him so much away from it." Thus she had easily slipped into the greater absorption in her house, even as she felt the lesser enthusiasm for her husband. She never lost her temper; she was too stout for that. Besides, she thought: "One in the family is enough to scold."

Addison was a son of the furrow, and had, in a reduced degree, the reticence characteristic of his peasant ancestors. Martha Addison accepted her husband's lack of refinement with dignity, but of his taciturnity she had always been a little afraid. When he was most garrulous or excited, he generally said little about what was actually passing in his heart.

Heretofore, Mrs. Addison had never been jealous of women. She had been pained more by his fundamental weakness. Ladies had been legion, yet her husband had passed them by with sarcasm or contempt.

But after James Addison had known Estella Lake for a few weeks, Mrs. Addison felt that something vital had entered her husband's life; she did not know what. He had never been a smoking nor a drinking man, but every now and then before dinner she detected the subtle odor of cocktail, or the stronger essence of nicotine upon his person. For once, she was wise enough

to make no comment upon the fact, but she mourned secretly; an unrecognized jealousy began to eat her heart.

There was another fault that the Rev. James Addison found in his wife. She never took a vacation. When other women went away in the Spring, after their house-cleaning was over, for a week or two to rest, Mrs. Addison stayed at home on the plea that the work would not be properly finished without her. In the Summer, she would not leave the house because fruits had to be canned in their season. No one could put up raspberries or cherries or peaches or tomatoes, or make crab-apple jelly as well as she. The consequence was that she was never out of the house, and when Mr. Addison felt the necessity of going away for a brief rest now and then, or of accepting an invitation for house-parties or yachting trips in the Summer, he always found himself alone. He did not resent being alone, but he did resent the tacit criticism which implied that his wife could get along without what he required. True, she did not object to his going away. It gave her the more freedom to clean house, and when he returned he inevitably found his study turned topsyturvy, that is, put in order from the woman's point of view. This fact gave rise to periodic eruptions when he came back, and he was the human geyser, while she was the much misunderstood and surprised spectator.

After one of the volcanic domestic scenes that arise from little causes and grow to large proportions, James Addison always went away from the house ashamed of himself, because in spite of his mental aggravation he had been made physically so comfortable. He could not criticize his wife because of his bed or board. To inaugurate a period of indigestion was an impossibility. Then his stockings were always darned with the same colored yarn. How few husbands can boast of this! His underwear was scrupulously cared for, and his trousers were rigidly pressed. His hot water was never late for shaving in the morning, and his evening clothes were always laid

out. His wife was never away from home when he needed her, and he did not realize how often the call of "Martha!" rang through the house, for the pettiest or even the most selfish pretext. She ran for him, she waited upon him, cared for him, often without a word of thanks, because she considered it her duty as a wife to make her husband comfortable, or possibly because she loved him.

When other women went to bed utterly exhausted by their shopping, their social calls, their luncheons at the club, their whist parties, and their entanglements, Mrs. Addison went tired out because she had been on her feet all day doing what a working-housekeeper is supposed to be paid for. Not a mouse nor a spider could make headway in her house, and when the last speck had been eliminated and the last counterpane perfectly smoothed out, then she sat down in her sewing room and cut herself out a shirt-waist, or made white neckties for her husband's parochial use.

It is true that Mrs. Addison did not care to read, and had no ear for music, and did not possess a refined artistic taste. She did not sprawl on sofas, and wear negligée costumes. It is one of the curious signs of our neurotic times that so many married people crave in each other what they cannot receive. Mrs. Addison would have forgiven her husband anything if he did not throw his slippers around the room, or leave his study in such disorder. And he would not have had that oppressive longing for he knew not what, if she had only given some signs of an esthetic temperament. If she had been a club woman, the Economic Club would have been the only one she could have heartily joined.

So they did rasp each other; that is, she rasped him, and with eagerness he fled to the studio and sat with closed thoughts. Estella never stimulated his intellect. His longing for her was like the instinct of a cat to lie in the sun.

It was at this time that Mrs. Addison took a severe cold. The back steps had not been properly scrubbed, and

she got down on her hands and knees to show the woman how. It was a raw day. When she finished, the steps were clean, but the lady was chilled. In two days she took to her bed.

It broke her heart to leave the entire management of the parsonage to her general-housework girl. It had to be done; but she thought that the momentum of her precepts and the force of example would carry the situation until she got about again.

Under these altered conditions, the minister proved himself, up to a certain point, a good husband and a good nurse. He had lately been preaching a series of sermons on self-sacrifice, and although he generally took the ground that he was paid to preach and not to practice, yet in this instance he could not escape the uncomfortable stimulus experienced by one who holds up moral ideals to the community. He could not be sublime in the pulpit, and cruel at home. He sat by his wife's bedside dutifully, holding her hand, and watching her ponderous figure gradually emaciating. He wanted to read to her, but she preferred to have him breathe upon the window-pane and wipe off blurs; most of all she wanted him with her to instruct him how to clean the spots off his coat and vest.

When he left her to the care of the nurse, for a few hours' rest in the afternoon, he hurried eagerly to Estella Lake; his wife was very ill, yet the artist was his comfort and rest. Her studio seemed more like home to him than any other spot.

One morning he sat beside his wife. She had been sick now for nearly two weeks, and he did not understand why she did not get any better. He had just tried to feed her himself, and wondered petulantly why she did not eat. He pushed the gruel away with contempt. He had no patience with what he called "spoon victuals." He was not in the best of humor that morning, for the coffee had been undrinkable; his chops had been fried to a crisp, and the rolls only suited to a

college digestion. He had not been comfortable since his wife's illness, and he resented with unreasoning bitterness this interregnum.

"Do put the curtain up, James." Martha Addison spoke in a weak, choked voice. "I want to see if you look well enough to go to the committee meeting this noon."

The minister did as his wife asked him, and then returned and sat on the bed beside her, and reached for her hand.

In the dull, opaque light of the stormy day, her fingers lay within his broad, brown grasp like a carving from ivory. The roughness and the callousness that come from household drudgery had so soon almost disappeared, and Martha's hand was left as soft as it used to be when he had first touched it as a boy in college. He looked down into her face with the first critical and discerning gaze that he had cast upon her since she was ill, and he was horrified to discover the change.

Being a large woman and full-blooded, Martha Addison had been noted for her russet cheeks. She had one of those sanguine complexions that one associates with high living. James Addison had always been a little ashamed of the growing lack of refinement in his wife's face. She had been such a pretty girl, with such a delicate color! As he looked down upon her, lying on the white pillow, gasping for breath, he noticed, with a start of the heart, that the coarseness which he had so often deplored had entirely gone, and that there had appeared in its place the alabaster translucency and aristocratic pallor which he had craved that she might possess.

His thoughts leaped back unconsciously. He recalled to his vision the girl he had wooed and won, and a great tenderness, such as had not filled him for—he could not remember how long—swept over his facile nature and drove the memory of his discomfort away. He bent down and kissed his wife as he used to do in the vanished dimple on her cheek, and murmured

tenderly in her ear, "Martha, how sweet you look this morning. It is very becoming for you to lie in bed. You must do so more often."

Martha Addison, with what strength she had, nestled her cheek close to his lips, and let her hand lie wearily and happily within his grasp.

"Oh, James," she said, "how kind you are this morning! How like your old self! I don't know that I can bear it." Her lips quivered with emotion. She was so weak that she dared not cry, and she lay there helpless.

"My dear," exclaimed her husband, a little confused by this exhibition of feeling, "you know that I love you, and would do anything in the world for you."

The sick wife turned her face in order to rest it in the palm of his other hand which had taken the place of his arm.

"My dear husband! My dear boy! You used to love me; you used to be so kind, so kind!"

The Rev. James Addison felt a strong gulping sensation in his throat. It was an emotion which he had not had since he was a boy, when he used to be easily moved by the reading of great deeds in Plutarch's lives, or over the recitation of a dramatic tragedy.

His eyes felt as if they were about to fill with tears. They grew large and limpid, and out of those beautiful, shallow pools that so easily reflected passing sensations, there shone an easy pity and a tardy remorse. His hand tightened over hers until she winced from pain.

"Don't," he said, not wishing to be made to feel too deeply; "let's not talk of it. Good times are coming, and you know that I love you as much as ever."

The poor woman shook her head feebly. She tried to speak, but stopped, racked by a fateful cough. Her husband held her gently, and then laid her back exhausted on the pillow.

"Leave your arm where it is," she said. "Nothing is of any use now. I have tried to be a good wife to you, and have loved you dearly, but some-



thing has come between us. I do not know what, and I do not know who; but—but, dear James, you are not the same and——”

“Oh, Martha,” interrupted the stricken man; his voice rang with real anguish—“Martha!”

Now he saw that her face had lost its transparency, and had been swiftly smitten gray.

“Don’t leave me,” she managed to whisper. “Whatever it is, do not go there again, James. Promise me.”

Her head fell limp in his arm. Her eyes closed, and holding her fast, the husband looked steadily out of the window into the mist. But the mist within his mind was as dense as the fog into which he gazed.

It was past the middle of the afternoon when the nurse suggested his taking a rest, as his wife had fallen asleep. When the Rev. James Addison slipped softly away and stole downstairs, he looked at his watch. It was after four o’clock, and Estella Lake must have been expecting him and wondering why he did not come. He was very tired, and in desperate need of diversion and of forgetfulness.

He put on his hat and coat and let himself surreptitiously out of the front door as if he had been a school-boy evading the recitation hour.

“You poor thing!” Estella herself let him in, and helped him off with his coat. “What you need is a good stiff drink to tone you up. See if I don’t mix you up the best one you ever had. Is she——?”

“Yes,” interrupted Addison gravely, “my”——he hesitated over a word that he felt would be profanation to use where he was, and then substituted——“my family is quite ill. Why, I never was so troubled before in all my life.”

He looked up at the girl in a bewildered sort of a way, for the new responsibility as well as the new discomfort was unnerving him. But Estella Lake, standing in the dim light, dressed in a long-trailed, much worn and rather slatternly blue velvet gown, stood watching him with

an amused exaltation as she rattled the shaker gaily.

“You must not worry too much, Jimmy,” she said with that easy familiarity which studio intimacy breeds. “It is what we call down East a sea-turn, and it will quickly change. Cheer up, the worst is yet to come.”

She poured the bubbling drink into one of those imitation Bohemian glasses that look so exclusive, and are so cheap.

“Here’s heel taps!” she said airily as she clinked the bottoms and the tops of the glasses together. “Here’s to better days!” She tossed the mixture down.

“And now a cigarette, my dear.” The girl opened her tortoise-shell case and handed it to him. She had never been quite so comforting and affectionate.

“She is a child of nature,” thought Addison dreamily to himself. Yet, as he lighted her cigarette first with the match and then his own his thoughts somehow drifted away like errant smoke from his bohemian surroundings, and fled to the bedside of his wife; there they settled. But he smiled into the down-turned face of the girl beside him.

“Sit here,” he said, as he moved over on the couch, “beside me.”

Their hands met and clasped.

“What should I do without your sympathy?” he murmured.

He was fooling himself and her, for, as he said the words, he knew that he wished to be elsewhere.

They may have been together eight or ten minutes, silently thinking apart, when the minister’s cigarette began to burn low and bitter; he had been worrying about his wife all the time, and his conscience smote him heavily. He looked at his watch.

“I must be going,” he said, jumping up and releasing her hand. “You see she is really very ill.”

“Couldn’t you stay a few minutes more?”

The man shook his head.

“Not if I ask it?”

The minister was silent.

"Oh, very well," Estella bridled coldly, "if you prefer to go."

"I prefer," he began stammering, "to—"

"What a man like you desires most to do, he will do." Estella Lake regarded her visitor with stern proprietorship. "Now, sir, will you not stay?"

"Believe me," James Addison spoke with as much tenderness as he could, "I want to stay, but she is very ill."

"In that case," answered Estella Lake, sharply, biting her lips, "then you had better go."

The Rev. James Addison turned, put on his coat and hat. Then without another word and without another look, he opened the door and went.

The minister of the church which boasted that it had no creed hurried home, walking as fast as he could. It was now raining heavily, and a new depression darkened his sanguine nature. For the first time in many months he went home eagerly, but with a gnawing apprehension. His wife's pathetic words kept reverberating in his ears, "I have tried to be a good wife to you." His heart softened at the picture of her white, wan face. When he thought it over, with the exception of a few minor exasperations, which a clergyman should pass over, if indeed he should not ignore them, she *had* been a good wife to him. During the time that she had been confined to her room, ill, he had found himself unexpectedly bereaved; all the things that had seemed to be so necessary to his life were wanting. As he neared his house he started on a dog-trot, ran up the steps, and opened the door feverishly with his key. He was confronted by two men, both members of his congregation; at his entrance they stopped their whispered talk and regarded him with great pity. With a boyish impulse, that had won for him much superficial affection, he grasped the hand of the elder man, and cried:

"Oh, doctor, she isn't any worse, is she?"

The two men exchanged significant and professional glances.

"My dear Addison"—the elder physician held his pastor's hand tightly—"it is no use concealing the fact. There has been a sudden change for the worse. We have been telephoning everywhere for you. Where have you been? It is possible that your wife may not survive the night."

"Oh, my God!" The Rev. James Addison uttered this pitiful prayer, perhaps the sincerest that he had offered for many years; he threw up his head at the shock, and then let it drop suddenly as if he had been shot in a vital spot.

"I will go right up to her," he gasped.

"She is very weak," replied the elder doctor, "and can hardly speak. But you are what she needs. One of us will be in the next room. Yes—go at once. You have no time to lose."

The minister went upstairs; he was dazed. It would have taken but a little more to make him delirious. His head swam, and he had to grope his way. He suddenly found himself, he knew not how, sitting on Martha's bed, and holding her head against his breast. The tears were now falling fast down his cheeks; they dropped upon his wife's face and scalded it. He heard a few panting words articulated with a difficulty which smote every nerve in him.

"That you, James? You are so kind to me! This is what I wanted—all these years."

The man could not answer; he held his wife the closer, as if he would wrench her from out the mouth of death. Remorse laid a convulsive clutch upon him, and tightened his throat; it seemed to cut him as with a blade, and to open his heart. Ah, how he suffered! Such physical anguish, such mental torture, such soul-rack, come only to him who knows the truth too late.

Martha lay quite still on her husband's breast. She was no longer busy. She had no wish to manage things about her. She had forgotten to worry lest the house were not in order. To be understood, to be tenderly treated, to

be loved, was all she thought about in that last moment. Her heart apologized eagerly for his long neglect, and condoned all he had inflicted, and obliterated what she had suffered.

It came on to be the hour before dawn; that grim time when human strength is at its lowest, and human souls float out. Martha stirred, and then she started within his arms. He tried to soothe her, not knowing how. Alas, he had lost, if he had ever had the art.

"There, there, dear!" he said.

"My husband! my husband!" she cried with a strong voice. "You *do* love me, don't you?"

He bent down and kissed her upon her white lips. As he looked close into her face, a beautiful transformation took place. For, swiftly and wonderfully, all its hard lines disappeared. The forehead that he had so often seen tangled became relaxed and smooth, and a look of ineffable peace took up its abode upon beautiful and youthful features. She drew a deep breath of content. It might almost have been said that she did not wish, because she did not dare, to draw another.

The deluge of sympathy had now almost passed by, leaving the Rev. James Addison but a wreck of his old handsome self. Ladies of his congregation in committee and singly had offered him practical and sentimental pity, until he was emotionally nauseated. He was still numb from his bereavement. He was not a very practical man. He had not allowed any of his female relatives to come and take the head of his table, and he had curtly refused the impertinent offers to be his housekeeper that so frequently overwhelm eligible widowers in the first loneliness of their sorrow.

Among many notes of condolence that came to him were those of Estella Lake. She did not write once, but again and again, often daily. A disinterested person might have read between her eager lines a fear lest the new conditions should dissolve their friendship. Every note closed with a post-

script begging him to run in at the same hour, a sacred time which she would always keep for him, and for him alone.

But Addison had not yet gone to see Estella. He felt that he owed something to the memory of his wife. During the last few years, with the exception of her dying moments, he had given her little of his company. She had come to look upon her husband as a guest in the house. He remembered this miserably. Then, slowly, he began to forget it.

As the time went on, James Addison found himself thinking more and more about Estella Lake, and felt that he wanted the abandon and comfort that her studio and presence meant to him. He had been cared for like a baby for years; he was suddenly deprived of the least of those little things that go to make up a pampered life; he was as confused as he was unhappy.

So it came about that the minister could stand his desolation no longer. His Committee had given him a two months' vacation in which to repair the ravages of his affliction, and, as he had no preaching to do, no preparation to make, he had been turned inward upon himself. As might be expected, he had not found there sufficient food for nourishment; he had come to the limit of his power to endure loneliness; he re-read the last letter from Estella Lake, and, at their hour in the afternoon, he went to her.

That she recognized his knock was no slight surprise to him, and that she was alone afforded him a quick gratification. Exactly as if they had parted but yesterday, and as though nothing had happened, she took his hat and coat and led him to a deep divan, made him lie down, as if he had been an invalid, and then, with her sinuous grace began to prepare the mixture upon which he had learned to depend. She did not talk, but she looked proud and happy. She stood before him pouring the liquid, her lips curled at the corners, with a self-satisfied smile of ownership.

The Rev. James Addison gazed

up at her as she poured the thin cascade of liquor. It looked to his imagination like trickling, brown tourmaline.

He was settling himself into sensuous relaxation when he caught her smile. He had never noticed it before. Indeed, he had never analyzed her at all. He had simply accepted her luxuriously without thinking. But now he observed her mouth; it indicated what he had ignored, the insincerity, the shallowness of her nature; it was flabby; it lacked the firmness that commanded respect. This revelation came to Mr. Addison like a shock. He straightened himself up from the sofa, and reached mechanically for the shallow, imitated Bohemian glass.

No sun by any chance ever entered that room, but as Estella Lake stood before him, a shaft of light from above smote her in front, and revealed an untidiness that startled his fastidious taste. For, if James Addison had not been born particular about his person, or his surroundings, his wife had made him so by long years of solicitous care. Indeed, without his knowing it, extreme cleanliness had become one of the esthetic conditions of life to him.

But the lace at Estella's sleeves was torn and grimy. Her velveteen dress, put on for studio comfort, and changed before departure, was carelessly caught at the throat, and spotted in detail. His eyes had never opened before upon her, and they did so now with a cold, critical glance that a woman dreads when she sees it for the first time.

Estella Lake caught this new expression, and intuitively understood it. She was beginning to propose a toast with enforced gaiety.

"I ought to make him feel more at home," she thought, but words refused to come.

There is an old Spanish proverb which says that a thousand pass, but only one sees. The Rev. James Addison now saw, and his gaze rested upon her personal disorder.

The floor had evidently not been swept since he had been there, and one could almost trace, without the eye-

sight of an Indian, the marks that footsteps made.

The girl bravely looked down on her guest's transparent countenance, and read it through. The minister had not yet tasted his cocktail, and his senses were acute, made more so possibly by sorrow and deprivation.

The unaired, unclean odor of the studio smothered his imagination. It was like the smell of a club in the early morning—stale tobacco, acrid exhalations of spilled cocktails, of easily opened whisky bottles, of fried cooking and of sweetish paints assailed him. He wondered why he had never noticed these disagreeable symptoms of a bohemian life before. Perhaps he had, and perhaps by contrast they had hitherto soothed him.

Suddenly, as if born into instantaneous being, a great desire for his own clean, well-ordered home arose in his heart. Why was he here? Why was he out of place? It seemed for the first time as if his presence here were an insult to his wife, if not to the church that believed in him. An anger, sharp and quick, arose into his cheeks; how had he allowed himself to cruise into this position?

And all the while the eyes of Estella Lake grew greener and larger. Her face became paler and more flaccid. Then her hands began to tremble.

The minister spoke slowly and with difficulty; he controlled his rising distaste with great gentleness. "It is of no use, Miss Lake," he said. "I can't." And he set the cocktail down on the table. "And I might as well say good-bye."

The girl did not reply. She dropped the untasted liquor beside her, and followed him with her wondering, last gaze. She stood where his final words had smitten her, after he had passed out, and after the door had clicked into the lock. Then she sank like a stabbed creature and hid her humiliation in her hands.

But the Rev. James Addison walked home. He drew cold breaths; he felt as if he had never been so bound, and never so free. There was only one

place in the world where he wanted to be. How could he have left his home? And for her!

He bounded into the silent house. The quiet soothed him. He felt that in this new and chastened loneliness he could not have spoken to any person. He went upstairs. A tender desolation assailed him at every step; he suffered, but it was a benignant pain. He passed through his own room into that of his wife—the room where she had died. He closed the door and locked it. He flung himself full length on the bed with his head upon the pillow.

What had she not given him? What had he done for her? Where was that gentle life which had cherished him and immolated itself?

He buried his head deeper in the pillow.

"Martha!" he said; "*Martha!*"

He remembered how he used to go over the house calling her for every little thing. He remembered how quickly, how eagerly she always answered.

He slipped from the bed to his knees. He could not pray; he could not weep. Oh, the longing—the longing!

## LITTLE OLD NEW YORK

By Gelett Burgess

THE thunder of the Elevated rattles in my ears,  
The trolleys at the crossing fill my soul with horrid fears,  
The evening rush is awful, as I cling to strap, and curse,  
The morning crowd to cityward is really something worse.  
The automobile's frenzy makes me shudder, turn and flee,  
But Little Old New York is plenty good enough for me!

When at last I get to Harlem, in my eighty-dollar flat  
There's no place for little children, scarcely room to swing a cat.  
The gorgeous city restaurants I am obliged to skip,  
I couldn't even find the price to pay a waiter's tip;  
The hansom is a luxury above my low degree,  
But Little Old New York is plenty good enough for me!

I see so many people I would like to make my friends,  
But no one wants to meet a man unless he always spends;  
The ladies are so beautiful, the men so smartly dressed,  
They never care to know a man without his trousers pressed.  
They say the country's wonderful, and so it is, maybe,  
But Little Old New York is plenty good enough for me!

I have heard about Grant's Monument, the Battery and Park,  
But I can never get to them till some time after dark;  
The Sunday papers keep me in till Sunday afternoon,  
When a little game of poker is a pleasure opportune.  
So I never saw the River and I never met the Sea,  
But Little Old New York is plenty good enough for me!

My pride is rather prejudiced and also is my taste;  
I think of all outside New York as but an arid waste;  
Chicago is my mockery and Boston is my joke,  
Manhattan is the only place for self-respecting folk!  
With graft and gold and gluttony we rival gay Paree,  
But Little Old New York is plenty good enough for me!



## THE SLIM WHITE PATHWAY

By I. K. Friedman

A SCOWL twisted the boss's hard mouth and black beard askew, furrowing his masterful forehead; there was evidently a tempest brewing, and the timid sweaters who glared up at him looked down on their machines hastily, each fearful lest the storm break and the lightning crash over his own shoulders. The boss halted with an emphatic step in front of Katerina Ladofski; she eyed him inquiringly, with a sort of patient fearlessness, as if she were used to unjust attack and ever ready for self-defense.

"The last fronts are all soiled; the waists are ruined; you will be docked," muttered the boss in his beard, barely loud enough for her to hear, as if it were immaterial whether she understood or not.

"The goods were streaked before she touched them. You sha'n't dock her; no!" shrilled Abraham Zarakoff, a tall, fragile-chested young man, who worked the machine that was the next-door neighbor to the girl's. He arose to his feet, clenching his slight fists; two red spots burned threateningly on the high cheek-bones of his sallow face—a face that was Russian to the eyebrows, denying the Semite as absolutely as if meanly ashamed of Jewish blood. The shop dropped a thread; the machines were as silent as at the noon hour; the timid operators were staggered by the quixotic chivalry of the Bayard of the sweat-shop.

The boss stalked down the row drawing a favorite word of opprobrium and vengeance through the space that separated his two long front teeth. It was a busy season, quickened by

rush orders; Zarakoff was one of his best hands, and policy bade valor to wait a time more opportune.

Katerina Ladofski flushed and turned to bow her thanks curtly to him who had rushed unbidden to her defense. They had worked side by side for two months, and this was the first day she had noticed him, that is to say, it was the very first day his individuality had impressed her, that she had singled him out of the fifty operators who merged in her idea of the shop.

Abraham Zarakoff, however, had observed her often; ever since she took her seat beside him she had overshadowed and dominated the squalid house of toil. He was susceptible, perhaps; he had the poetic temperament and his nimble fancy wove no end of fantastic romances around his elected heroine. What, in the first place, was she doing there? Why did a refined girl with an intellectual face and small white hands work as a sweater? He remembered years ago in Russia, during his boyhood, that he had lifted a log out of the snow and discovered a patch of green grass flourishing under the accidental shelter, and this girl seemed as much out of place in the dirty shop as the living reminder of a past Summer amid frozen fields.

Such fruitless questions occurred to no one else; they had seen other girls come with dainty hands and intellectual faces and leave with hands roughened and faces stupefied by the work that has no mercy for either body or mind. Besides, this world is run

neither by logic nor preconception, and the New York Ghetto—a section as odd as if it were removed from the rest of the world and stood apart by itself—was the veritable domain of topsy-turvydom, ruled by his majesty, the Unexpected.

Even Zarakoff, who was primarily artistic and observed only what flattered his imagination into activity, might not have vexed himself with all this idle speculation if the girl were not beautiful, for beautiful she was to him, although, as a matter of fact—and he respected fact about as much as most men respect poetry—her looking-glass pronounced her lacking on even the right side of prettiness. Her head was long and flat, her forehead wide and firm, her mouth small and decided, her jaw too stiff for a woman unless she would make the world hard for herself, her nose as hooked and almost as large as Cæsar's; her short black hair was parted down the middle by a long white line. The sketch is suggestive of masculinity, and justly so; for only Katerina Ladoffski's mild brown eyes, her gentle voice and her tender expression asserted claims in her behalf for the eternal womanly. Her small white hands, according to Zarakoff, of course, were queenly womanly.

When the merciless clock—dubbed capitalism's pocket watch by Zarakoff, whose socialism arranged itself on the side of his poetry—struck twelve, the machines relaxed with a groan, and the knight of the sweat-shop looked toward his lady with hopeful, inviting eyes; but she had for him no appreciative word that would prove an open sesame for the unlocked door of conversation outside of which he had stood so yearningly for day after day and week after week. She drew the first volume of a cheap paper-covered edition of Tolstoi's "War and Peace" from her pocket, opened her lunch-box, and ate while she read. He stood near, timorous and abashed, seeking but not finding the courage to speak; he walked away, then he turned back, resolved to cast his all on this one die.

"I have read 'War and Peace'—in the Russian," he said.

"So," she answered, glancing up, then turning to devour her book again.

The rebuff stung; but perhaps the sting acted as a counter-irritant to his self-consciousness, and he found himself remarking, "I liked it better than 'Anna Karénina.'"

"Did you?" she asked, with a scarcely perceptible sarcastic emphasis in the interrogation.

Evidently he cut but a sorry figure in competition with the great Tolstoi, and he betook himself to a café and did his best to drown his humiliation in a sea of tea, at two cents the glass. "I am not the man to attract women," he reflected bitterly. He had tried before and failed before, and his thirty years were as ungraced by a responsive love as if there were not a woman in the world. He beheld his reflection in the fly-specked mirror and there discovered the explanation of his amatory failures. A despondent mood photographed him, exaggerating his ugliness; his nose was too flat; his eyes bulged and popped out; his cheek-bones were ludicrously high, protruding like two awkward knuckles; each feature insisted too stubbornly on its importance and refused to accommodate itself to the other; and his physique was too insignificant to atone for the faults of his physiognomy. However, an intellectual woman like Katerina Ladoffski ought to rise superior to a man's appearance and take him for the worth of his soul. Abraham Zarakoff himself was attracted more by feminine beauty than he would have been willing to acknowledge.

The following noon, taking advantage of Katerina's momentary absence, he laid a Yiddish translation of Chekhov's stories on her machine; when she discovered the book, she glanced at it indifferently and handed the gift back to the anxious donor with, "I can't read Yiddish; but I thank you quite as much."

"I might teach you."

"I have no time to learn."

Her manner shut off conversation, separating him from her more effectually, although more politely, than if a door had been slammed in his face. He was hurt; nor was he Spartan enough to hold an impassive face to his tormentor while misery gnawed at his heart. A sudden light in her brown eyes showed that his crestfallen expression was duly noted, but she evidently justified herself to herself; for she offered not a word in extenuation.

"She does not read Yiddish; she has not a Jewish feature, either; I wonder if she is a Jewess?" he pondered, when he bent over his throbbing machine and work brought balm for his pain. His romantic inventiveness gained a start and jumped disdainfully over all the probabilities, refusing to halt before the stumbling blocks thrust in his way by the truth that the East Side claimed Jewesses in plenty who could read Chinese as easily as the jargon, and that there were scores of girls in the district who looked no more like daughters in Israel than did their Gentile sisters.

She was a Gentile; his poetic soul was pleased so to have it, and the variegated threads of race and creed lent splendor to the pattern woven by romance. Then came mystery to wield the skeins in quaint and unreadable arabesques that stood out in bold relief on his cloth of gold. If she was a Gentile, how came she in a Jewish sweat-shop? Not by choice, surely; if by necessity—tell him but what the necessity was and he had the key to the perplexing but none the less delightful riddle.

"And if she were a Gentile, what then?" he asked himself. A shrug of his shoulders answered the question that he had raised in his mind. It was all one to him. He believed in the brotherhood of man and the sisterhood of women; his religion, in so far as he would admit that he had one, consisted in a fine scorn for the limitations of the creeds; long ago he was a stranger to the synagogue; the holidays came and went without his obeis-

sance; and the observance of the ceremonies were a memory of his boyhood.

When he left the shop that night and walked down the stairs that led from the lofts to the street, he found himself, more by accident than forethought, just behind her; and when they turned from the hallway to the sidewalk, their eyes met. He made a mute but eloquent appeal for her consideration; his was the persistency of the race.

"Oh," she said, quite spontaneously, as if resuming a conversation that had been deferred for but a minute, "I have read Chekhov in the original."

His heart gave a leap; it was as if she had remarked: "I wish to tell you that you are not unworthy of my acquaintance, after all. I take this opportunity to let you know it."

"And you like the stories?"

"Very much indeed. He is real as life itself."

He wanted to say that their mutual love for the realistic should prove a binding cord; but the assertion, as he turned it over in his mind, struck him as being overbold, and he walked along by her side in silence, his eyes on the pavement, rearranging elusive words in less offensive sentences.

They moved along toward Chatham square; here she paused, bade him a good night and disappeared in the tangle of streets. It was as if a butterfly, captured after a long pursuit, had escaped from the hand that had closed tenderly over it; but still his nerves thrilled deliciously with the sensation of having held, if for but a moment, the fluttering, long-desired, beautiful being; and he went to his tenement home a mere dream amid a procession of dreams. He sat up half through the night to translate one of his Yiddish poems into Russian for her, assuming his task as joyfully as if the whole world were awaiting his rhymes, and fame were standing by with an everlasting crown.

He halted before her machine the next noon in quest of the only laurels he craved for his obscure muse. "I

wrote this last night; will you read it when you find time?" he asked.

"Certainly," she answered, taking the proffered manuscript. A smile promised to bespeak her unspoken appreciation, but it flitted undiscernibly away, and she drew the second volume of "War and Peace" out of her pocket, opened her lunch-box and read while she ate. He eyed her inquiringly the next day, yearningly the day thereafter; but on Saturday, when he was fearing that she had forgotten him and his offering, she hailed him and said: "I have been very busy all week, but I managed to read your poem last night. It is very strong, I think," and she dismissed him for Tolstoi, even though a visible question trembled on his hungering lips.

"Strong! Strong!" he thought aloud, taking innumerable glasses of hot tea into the confidence of his injured pride. "Strong! What did she mean by that?" It was faint and ambiguous praise, worse than an honest condemnation, and yet the longer he trifled with the word, turning each of its six letters over in the light of his strong intelligence, as a lapidary turns the facets of a diamond beneath his glass, the more did he make it include. Strength was beauty, grace, fervor, charm; it was the necklace that clasped the jewels. It might be the highest praise that the taciturn and mysterious young woman could pay; for behold! were not her compact frame, her long flat head, her odd face, the very embodiment of the quality of strength? Doubtlessly this was the scale with which she weighed men and things. He tried conclusions with the counter-balance and acknowledged in a shudder that the balance tipped the wrong way; weakness was written on his face, and, therefore, he appealed not to her.

He brought to her the other spoils that he wrung at the cost of his health from his nocturnal muse, and always she accepted them with the same indifference, with a slight variation of the same phrase, "I have been very busy all the week, but I managed to read your poem last night." In what

fashion, he wondered, did her nights claim the fraction of her energies not consumed by her laborious days. Jealousy wracked him, throwing out the contradictory suspicions of a rival; his torment became unendurable, but the constant plying of its lash spurred the timid man to rush in where in calmer moods he would have feared to tread.

"Perhaps you write verse?" he asked, as he usurped a place beside her on her way home one night.

"No," she answered.

"Prose, then?" he ventured.

"Other things demand my time. Good night," and she left him at the tangle of streets in Chatham square and disappeared.

"Other things! Other things!" he repeated like the refrain of one of his verses. What were these other things? She had not spoken with an air of superiority, as of one looking down on him and his ambitious avocations; but her words carried a suggestion of gravity, as if these other things, be their value what it might to the rest of the world, were all in all to her. "Does not the cloven hoof of the vulgar poseur stick through all this?" he asked himself suddenly, as if the unworthy question had come from another person; ashamed of the thought that had arisen unbidden, for which his own was irresponsible, he choked it down with a vigorous, "No, no!" It was he who made the mystery of her; she courted no baffling mists from which she might peep forth as a goddess from behind a cloud, half-veiled, half-unveiled, to pique the curiosity of prying mortals. All she requested, with due politeness, was to be left alone and to herself, and being human, and in love with her to boot, he was willing to grant any favor but that.

One noon when she was cutting the leaves of the fourth volume of "War and Peace," he nerved himself to ask, preparing his faint heart for a refusal first, "Will you go with me to Cooper Institute tonight to attend the meeting of 'The Friends of Russian Freedom'?"

She smoothed the plaits of her black hair with her small white hand and was silent for a moment, as if she were considering the advisability of accepting or rejecting the invitation. His heart warmed with the thought that he seized from her hesitating lips when she said gently: "Thank you, no; there is too much talk in the world. I tired of talk long before I left Russia."

"Katerina Ladoffski, why did you leave Russia?" He had taken the fatal plunge; he had let his insidious curiosity lead him unseen to the brink of the precipice, and now it tossed him over heartlessly. His ears were so frightened by the sound of his own words that he would have given a deathless epic to recall them whence they came; and so staggered was he by his own foolhardiness that he was not conscious until afterward that he had taken an unwarranted liberty with her name.

"Abraham Zarakoff," she replied calmly, flushing slightly, "I left Russia for my own reasons."

He stammered out a pardon, followed by another pardon; then he pleaded that she overlook his breach of good sense and good manners. She consented with a smile—the broadest that he had ever seen cross her face—and he concluded therefrom that he had made a greater ass of himself in clambering out of the pit than he had in tumbling into it. Maybe she divined his discomfort; maybe she felt that she had been wantonly hard on him; but, at any rate, she let him talk on, encouraging him with generous answers, given without her usual stint, and before the hands of the sweat-shop clock pointed to one they were well in the way of their first extended conversation. Socialism, being nearest to his heart and closest to the upper layers of his brain, slipped into their talk like an unbidden guest who is aware of his boldness and not in the least ashamed of it. He quoted Karl Marx; she proved the prophet misquoted and hauled the disciple on the scaffold of his own erection. Well, it was worth the inconsequential defeat

to learn a trifle more about the resources of his gentle adversary.

When he returned to work his hands fairly flew, turning out shirt-waists, as if his machine, like its operator, were treading on air. Abraham Zarakoff was a happy man; he saw himself as one who had wooed and won, and, during the interim, composed a book of sonnets that made Shakespeare's "mysterious she" live only to be compared rather unfavorably with his own.

Before Katerina Ladoffski had read through the freshly cut papers of the fifth volume of "War and Peace," she and Abraham Zarakoff had discussed everything, but herself, over countless glasses of tea served to both of them in the little café around the corner from the sweat-shop. It taxed all his tact and self-restraint, and he had none too much of either, to ask what he most wanted to know; for when one has the arrow and the bow, and the target dares the marksman, it is hard to refrain from aiming at the bull's-eye.

The walk home together became the regular but never monotonous ending of his day's work; but always when they reached the tangle of the ways at Chatham square she bade him good night in a manner that commanded, "So far and no farther shalt thou go." It whetted his growing curiosity and vexed his love; for ought not their friendship to presume a fuller confidence? Twice he was on the point of surrendering decency to inquisitiveness and following her, but his self-respect saved the day and he dismissed the impulse as altogether unworthy of him. Ingenuity came to his rescue at last; he asked permission to read and talk over with her a Ghetto story that he had written in English—an idiom that Katerina was acquiring with surprising rapidity. She assented with a frank alacrity that told him, in the matter of lodgings at least, she had nothing to conceal. His romantic imagination, he decided in anger with himself, was wasting energy in the building of walls that toppled over at a naive word from her lips.



He entered her room—one of the innumerable, dingy, box-like arrangements of a Chrystie street tenement—in somewhat the same expectant spirit with which the bookworm opens a long-sought volume that may or may not bring the knowledge ransacked libraries have refused to divulge. The room, like his own, was pathetically bare, rescued from degrading poverty only by the photographs of the modern seers, whose radiant visages shower the gold of comfort among the destitute and condemn while they ennoble the homes of the affluent. The uncompromising, iconoclastic Ibsen was among her Penates, and so, too, the massive-browed Tolstoi, with countenance virile and rugged, as if dug out of the ground; Prince Kropotkin, beaming humanitarianism, held a place high in honor; and—but why catalogue the humble collection, representing but an outlay of pennies, into the pretentiousness of a museum? Suffice it to say that her patron saints were those whose effigies usually sanctified the humble abodes of the East Side intellectuals, who may as easily be counted as the chimneys of New York's Ghetto.

At these he glanced with eyes athirst, seeking in them a clue to the innermost secrets of her life, and finding it not he turned elsewhere, hoping, perhaps, to discover a symbol of the Judaic faith, or at least a memento, a trifle in the way of an heirloom, that would vouch for ancestors who in their time were sons of the covenant. His quest was as barren of satisfying results as her room of furniture, and he betrayed the failure of his purpose and opened to her gaze the recesses of his mind with the question, asked in Russian:

"Are you a Jewess by birth, Katerina Ladoffski?"

"Abraham Zarakoff," she answered, her small white hands clasped in the lap of her simple black dress, "you are the only person but one who ever asked me that question; the other was a blind woman in Kieff."

Carmine stained his sallow cheeks

and he was for starting along the interminable road of apologies when she said, "It is growing late; I have other work to do before the night is over. Read me your story."

She was singularly frank in her criticism, harshly so he might have thought had not her voice been so low-keyed and gentle, as if her honesty would permit no compromise with candor, but yet as if candor itself had the advantage in the choice of shades it might employ. In a word she told him what he had long feared was true, that prose was not his instrument.

On the way home he was less beset by worryment over the string torn from his muse's lyre than he was by the significance of Katerina's presence in Chrystie street. If she was a Gentile, why in the world did she choose to dwell amid the sons and daughters of Israel; and if she was a Jewess what was the sense of resenting by implication, as it were, her relationship to the chosen people?

"I shall find out in good time," he said to himself, dismissing what he was unable to solve—a method of treatment to which the mysteries are accustomed.

Before Katerina Ladoffski reached the "finis" in the last volume of Tolstoi's Iliad—it is like traveling across the continent to find the signpost that marks the end of European Russia—she and Abraham Zarakoff were on terms intimate enough to give the latter some justification for putting the word that might end his bachelorhood; although he confessed in his less exalted moods that he knew her no better than when she had held him off at arm's length. The wall that divided them had come down, but a glass partition had taken its place; yet the glass was stained, and the verity that he could but dimly descry the shadows cast on the other side of it, drove him to distraction; for though a man may be lured and fascinated by the mystery that envelops the woman of his choice he is rarely made happy by it. However, he was more than willing to accept

her on faith, and to trust matrimony to supply all that was lacking to his tranquillity.

Thrice he had led her diplomatically to the subject of marriage and she had set him adrift and afar with a jest or a trivial remark, which astounded him beyond measure when he paused to consider the seriousness of her demeanor, of her character, of her attitude toward life.

One mild night when April was holding out a hand to May, they boarded the ferry for a ride to Staten Island. They sat on the upper deck, drinking in the fragrance of the salt that the boat set free as it stirred the sleeping waters; even so the night and her presence ruffled and set to palpitating all the sentiment in him. A full moon, pouring molten gold to its rim, put the period to what he was rash enough to call the perfect sonnet of the night. The lights on the shore line of Brooklyn, of New Jersey, from New York receding unwillingly, from Saint George slowly drawing nearer, softened the darkness, and were reflected in the water like undecided dim stars in the sky above. He was silent beyond his wont, touched by these things, discomfited by the resolves that arose in him one minute and slipped away the next.

"A penny for your thoughts," she said to him.

"Katerina Ladoffski," he replied, seizing, in desperation, the bull that was goring him by both horns, "I was thinking of the best way to ask you to become my wife."

"The water makes you sentimental," she observed, with a smiling but tense face. "I hope the boat will put us on shore soon."

He bit his lip. They passed the Statue of Liberty, thrusting its light with a warlike arm in the teeth of the lowering darkness. "You are heartless, very," he groaned.

She laid her hand on his arm tenderly, supplicatingly, and drew nearer to him. "I don't mean to be so. I am more merciful than you will ever know."

He had learned long ago the futility

of questions, and he asked none, accepting her answer as one might accept the sphinx's own unriddling of its mystery, even though the solution proffered be as baffling as the riddle itself.

"Look," she spoke suddenly in mild exclamation, pointing to the slim white pathway, bubbling and phosphorescent, that the boat cleaved out of the blue-black waters, gradually disappearing, leaving no trace behind to tell that it ever had been.

He nodded absently, only half desecring, too dazed to care whether or not he saw what she wished to point out to him.

"Abraham Zarakoff," she said, a faint sob in her voice, "I am like that; sometime you will understand."

Months afterward, although a listless ear heard but confusedly then, he recalled the plaintive simile that made her a term in the evanescence of things. Now he sat stunned and dazed; all was darkness around him; it was as if a thick fog had swept in from the ocean, snuffing the golden lights that had lent the night the appearance of a vast hall mellowly illuminated.

Spring was giving way before Summer; the season of promise had passed; the season of fulfilment was here, and the sensitive, impressionable soul of Abraham Zarakoff, responsive as the earth itself to the fitting moods of the heavens, broke the chains of his melancholy and his lethargy, and resolved to conquer, insisting to himself that Katerina Ladoffski's fate lay in his hands quite as much as his own. She should not and she could not turn him aside with an inscrutable phrase or a flippant word that was out of tune with her serious self.

"Tonight or never, and it will be tonight," he said to himself as he walked in high courage and enforced good spirits over to her room.

She received him in her frank, placid way, and for a full hour he talked on themes that were as remote from the main issue as he himself from the perfect courtier; for he was determined in advance to shoot his bolt out

of a clear sky rather than to announce its coming by a prelude of thunders that might frighten her long before they could convince. The moment arrived; he paused amid his rambling conversation and drew a sustaining breath for the effort when a loud knock sounded repeatedly on the flimsy door.

"What grim messenger knocks for long-neglected me?" she smiled, as she arose to answer the summons.

A short, stout woman, a thin black shawl drawn closely over her forehead and around her shoulders—a figure of the Jewish housewife such as the teeming Ghetto claimed by hundreds—stepped into the room and stood there with the positive rigidity of one ready to insist on the right to remain. The pose, one would have said, had the form been graceful and lithe, created a suggestion of the statuesque. The shawl slipped from the head to which it clung like a veil, nay, like a disguise, revealing a high brow and a crown of silvery white hair combed high in front, clipped short in back.

"Little Mother!" cried Katerina in Russian, and she fell, crying and laughing, shaken to the depths of her calm, self-contained being, into the outstretched arms of the newcomer.

A glance told the astonished Abraham Zarakoff that no stolid Jewish matron, with a horizon limited by the bartering push-carts on the streets and the walls of an orthodox home, stood in this woman's shoes, but rather a Russian lady of birth, breeding and attainment, one who had lived actively, struggled nobly and suffered heroically—the deep lines on her strong face were eloquent of it—for what he knew not.

The "Little Mother" kissed Katerina's cheek heartily, her gray eyes twinkling in supreme satisfaction, and without adding a word of her own to the confused patter of exclamation, endearment and surprise, she dropped into a chair, as if infinitely wearied, drew a cigarette out of her pocket and smoked it with the contented air of one who has reached home at last and may indulge in its secure comforts.

It was easy for Abraham Zarakoff

to see that one person's presence made two others uncomfortable; in truth, Katerina's beseeching look told him to go. He took his leave, feeling as if he were the one substantial body in an unreal world. Did the appearance of the stranger augur good or ill, did she come to cast shadow or sunshine (for him) over Katerina's threshold? He hesitated in fear to strike out the mark of interrogation.

The next day Katerina was absent from the sweat-shop, and her machine, remaining idle for the first half-hour of the morning, haunted him like an evil omen, inspiring superstitions that were twice terrible because he could not sneer them down or laugh them away. At noon, leaving his lunch untouched, he betook him to her lodging. His knock reverberated in a silent room. The frowzy landlady of the flat at last poked her handkerchiefed head through the kitchen door, scowling at the intruder's stupidity in insisting on an answer when there was so evidently none there to render it. Miss Ladoffski had packed her scant belongings and left that morning early, whither she knew not; evidently the rent had been paid and so she cared not.

"Was there a letter—any message for me?" he faltered, leaning against the wall.

"None," came the curt reply, half-lost in the loud slam of a door.

Abraham Zarakoff did not return to the shop that afternoon. Like a fitful ghost he wandered the streets, talking and mumbling to himself, his sad eyes fixed on space as if in hope that she might come walking to him out of it. For weeks afterward he wore the look of a man in eternal search for something that is evading him eternally; then even that half-forlorn, half-hopeful look left him, and his features betrayed his utter despair.

They chaffed him unmercifully in the sweat-shop, calling him "the jilted lover" and "the man who went about with his liver tied to the end of his nose," but them he heeded not, deaf to all but the voice that wailed in the dismal chambers of his heart. He

did not sleep at night, and by day he moved among the awakened like one fast asleep.

July heated the Ghetto until the walls of the flaming furnace turned to carmine, slowly crumbling to white. The brick walls, the asphalt pavement, the vast receptacle of stone and mortar, crackled with the fuel pitched into its maws by a tireless sun, and at night the sullen sky closed over it like a pan over a brazier. On the fire-escapes, on the roofs, on the doorsteps, a suffocating people lay gasping for relief; mothers eyed their sick babies despairingly and muttered incoherent prayers with parched tongues; men groaned forlornly, too faint to word their agony. The stars palpitated in the brassy sky like coals of fire, hot to the eye that beheld them.

The fourth day of the month registered the greatest number of fatalities from the siege, counting its victims after the fashion of a grim besieger, almost boastfully. On the night of that black-lettered anniversary of the Declaration of Independence—sporadic noises and scant illuminatives paid it faint homage—Abraham Zarakoff quit his glowing room and fought with a sweltering humanity for a share of space on the overcrowded benches of Seward Park. Luck favored him; he was just in time to secure a vacated seat. His fatigue drove the best bargain it could with sleep, and he sank into a doze, broken every few minutes by the waves of heat that beat against the stifled city, scorching his cheek and penetrating his closed eyelids like the flare of a torch.

Two whitebeards who sat next to him were holding an extended argument on whether one suffered more from extreme heat than intense cold, and after agreeing that the ravages of Winter were less to be dreaded, although the price of coal was to be considered, they locked horns over the vexatious issues of current politics.

"I tell you, Isador," insisted one, in Yiddish, "I shall vote the Democratic ticket; the Republican candi-

date is a young man; he has still time to be President."

"Yes, David," replied the other, "but the older man may die before his term is over; then what? I shall vote for the younger man!"

Abraham Zarakoff dozed on, conscious of storing up a conversation that would provoke his laughter when he examined it in a mood more favorable to humor. His loquacious neighbors respected his somnolence for a moment or two, then they seized on Russia as a topic large and unsettled enough for their controversial mettle. Isador defended vociferously the assassination of the tyrannical minister of education whose death was announced in the morning's paper. Jacob deprecated it; thereupon Isador waxed hot as the weather, much to the discomfort of their unwilling listener, who was trying to lure the coy sleep that these two frightened off the very moment it promised to approach. The slaying of the Neroesque De Bogué was news to Abraham Zarakoff, dead to all worlds but his inner gloomy one, and his avid interest in affairs Muscovite shook him into wakefulness, and when he was best prepared to enjoy the quaint logic of these odd debaters, they quit the bench and left him to bemoan the slumbers they had destroyed without making any adequate restitution.

A Yiddish paper—a document that had been hauled into evidence during the argument, and then thrown out of court—was stirred to rustling by Abraham Zarakoff's restlessness. It exasperated his fretful nerves, and he lifted the disturber from the bench to toss it aside. A few feet removed an arc-lamp burned with an unwelcome vividness, and the flaring headlines caught his eye. Soon every line of the two-columned account wound a separate tentacle around his attention; he belonged to the article.

The young woman who threw the bomb that sealed Minister De Bogué's dreadful fate made no attempt to escape, counting her own life a low price to pay for ridding her country of the man whom she considers the people's worst enemy. She is—

The spluttering carbons threatened to blot out the Yiddish type, and won the trembling reader's execration. The interruption was scarcely longer than a heart's beat; the light burned clear and bright again, throwing the black lettering in funereal relief.

She is absolutely calm and self-possessed, and refuses to divulge her name to the St. Petersburg police, fearing, doubtless, to implicate her fellows in the conspiracy. To all questions she has but one answer, given always in her peculiarly musical voice and with her small white hands clenched, "I am one of a thousand who have sworn death to the persecutors of liberty."

The words danced, changed places, rolled over and into one another; the arabesque Hebrew letters were a blotch; a film curtained Abraham Zarakoff's bloodshot eyes; his heart beat in

his throat; he squeezed the back of the bench with a cold hand.

The czar's sleuths will surely discover the girl's name before twenty-four hours are over; for her individuality is too striking to escape identification. Her face, with its prominent nose, and her long, rather flat head, covered with black hair parted in the middle, is strong as that of a man; and yet the tender expression of her gentle brown—

Abraham Zarakoff fainted away; his body dropped on the bench like a stick of wood released from its bundle by a broken cord.

The park policeman, called by the loud cries of eye-witnesses, bore him tenderly across the street to the drug store in East Broadway.

"This makes the tenth man that has been overcome by heat in the park tonight," he remarked to the druggist, busy with restoratives.



## A SONG OF GRIEF

By Grace Duffield Goodwin

THE bird that sings my dead to me  
From that far dawn of day,  
Is just a common robin  
In the weary month of May.

Oh, that month of May was weary  
With its drift of apple-bloom,  
And the touch of alien sunshine  
On the long night of the room!—

On the room's long night of struggle,  
And the endless grip of pain—  
I wish that I might never hear  
A robin sing again.

I wish that I might never see  
That bloom across the way.  
The heart of Springtime breaks for me  
Whenever it is May.



## AT THE THEATRE

By May Isabel Fisk

She speaks over the heads of line standing at the box-office window, to her husband:

NOW, Richard, don't take anything but aisle seats—you know I don't like anything else—having those men drag over you between the acts. . . . What's that? . . . Eighth row? Is that the best he can do? . . . Well, ask him again if he's positive. . . . I don't believe it, because just look at all these people waiting he's got to give seats to. Well, if he's perfectly sure I suppose we had better take them. . . . Now, Richard, I believe if you had been a little more decided with him, we would have done better. . . . Of course he said so—they're all disagreeable, but I think. . . . *(They enter the house.)*

The ushers are all busy. I never went into a theatre in my life that they weren't showing someone to a seat and I had to wait. And it's late at that. . . . Well, dear, it's almost time for the curtain to go up—I call that late. . . . If it's the eighth row we can find them ourselves. Come on. . . . Yes, we can; come on. . . . There, this is it. What are the numbers? . . .

Oh, Richard, I told you on the aisle. . . . Well, suppose he did, I said on the aisle, didn't I? . . . I don't care, I said. . . . Well, I'm not going to stand up here before all these people and argue about it—I know what I said. . . . I'm not, either, but you will make me if you continue like that. . . . All right, have it your own way—you are so obstinate, Richard, when you get an idea in your head. . . . I shan't quarrel with you, no matter what you say—I'm good-natured, if you're not.

Oh, bother—now we've got to squeeze past all of them. It will pull my bodice all crooked. . . . There, I knew you would—you are so clumsy, Richard. . . . Done? Why, you've stepped on my skirt and torn it loose from the belt. You might have been a little careful. . . . How could I hold it up passing in front of all these people? You are so unreasonable.

These vacant seats must be the ones. I don't believe I'm going to be able to see a thing. You know, Richard, it wasn't my idea to see this play at all. I should have much preferred to wait until next week when they put on a fresh play, whatever it was—they've been playing this so long. . . . If that woman down in front doesn't take her hat off I sha'n't be able to see a thing. . . . Now, isn't that horrid of you, Richard, and just like you. What did you bring me for—to have a good time or not? . . . Well, all right; then let me enjoy myself in my own way.

What is that usher beckoning to us for?—what does he want? . . . Well, here are our tickets. . . . What! They're balcony seats! Then what in the world did you drag me down here for? . . . I didn't insist any such thing. And I told you at the box-office the eighth row would do. . . . You couldn't hear with all those people talking? . . . I don't believe these seats are sold at all. . . . I don't believe it, with all that line waiting behind you. Of course there's no use standing here in the middle talking about it. *(They crush their way out.)*

I don't see how I'm going to climb these stairs in this tight gown. . . . No, I don't want to go home—how hateful

of you to suggest it. . . There, we're up at last.

Eighth row in the balcony! Horrible! Go and see if you can't get others. . . All sold out? I don't care if he did say so—maybe he's changed his mind by now. . . Very well; I see you are determined to make me uncomfortable. . . I can't help it if they don't like it—we've got to get by—you will kindly remember I told you to get aisle seats.

I don't feel as if I were going to enjoy this a bit. . . You don't, either? Thank you, that is pleasant. Take me out for a nice evening and then do all you can to spoil everything.

These seats are worse than ever when you get in them. There, I've dropped my boa climbing over these people. You'll have to go back and look for it.

Why, I certainly did wear it, and I haven't taken my coat off yet—I couldn't have left it anywhere. Just ask them all to get up while you look.

Well, it's a matter of perfect indifference to me whether they like it or not. I'm not going to lose my new boa just for the sake of not disturbing them.

You don't see it? Then poke about underneath with your cane. . . You don't see it? Well, you'll have to ask them all to get out in the aisle while you look under. . . There, what's that big black thing? . . . Oh, that lady's foot. . . No, it isn't there. . . Now, don't ask me again if I left it at home. But it *must* be there—I remember stepping on something as we were getting past. There, what's that?

Oh, that man's hat! It does look badly. That must have been what I stepped on. It is too bad, but you know really it is a risk to put a hat on the floor—you know if you held it in your lap or pinned it on the back of the seat the way we do—*(All seat themselves again.)* . . . No, I didn't wear it tonight—I remember, now. I was afraid I'd lose it just like this.

Oh, Richard, you didn't get a program. . . You have one? That won't do—I want another one to use now and one to put in our program book. . . No, I won't wait till later—they may be all gone. . . Now, I ask you, did we come here for the comfort of these people or to amuse ourselves? . . . I should think so—go and get it. *(Everyone again rises.)*

They're all gone? What did I tell you—didn't I say they would be? Now, what good would it have done to have waited till the end of the performance if they are all gone already? If you would only listen to me. . . Good gracious, Richard, I forgot to tell the nurse to be sure to give baby the bottle in the top of the ice-box instead of the one at the bottom. What shall we do? . . . You'll have to go right out and telephone—that's all there is to it. . .

If you say anything more about disturbing these people I *shall* lose my temper—what are they here for? *(Everyone again rises.)*

Well, you're back again just in time—there goes the curtain. . . Why, for goodness' sake, if this isn't that stupid thing I went to see with Alice!



## UNAVOIDABLE DELAY

"THE enemy is in great confusion, and this is the instant to attack, sir!" the dusty and breathless aide reported.

"I can't help it," the great general replied. "I just received a message from the reporters and moving-picture men, stating that they had been delayed and wouldn't arrive for two hours yet."

# PHANTOMS

By Temple Bailey

**C**OLLINSWOOD saw the empty house first by moonlight. It stood on top of a high bluff, its blank windows staring down at the road as from the deep sockets of a skull. The rest of the house was white and ghost-like, but it was the darkness behind those windows that held Collinswood. What was in there—bare room, bare floors, bare walls, or furniture and pictures and rugs falling to pieces with age?

He spoke about it to Howell, when he met him down the road.

"Who owns it?" he asked.

"It's a part of the McChesney estate," said the doctor, "but no one has lived there for years."

"It fascinates me," said Collinswood slowly.

The young doctor glanced at him sharply.

"Stop it," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"I saw that snake's head that you painted yesterday," said the doctor, "and any man who can imagine a horror like that needs bracing air. Your liver is out of order. Go down to the shore and try seascapes for a while."

But Collinswood shook his head. "I am going to paint the empty house," he said, "with snakes on the path and bats in the eaves, and I shall paint it at night—by moonlight."

"Don't," warned the doctor. "Take my advice and go to the sea."

"No," said Collinswood obstinately.

"Oh, well," said the doctor, "go on and do as you please." And he drove off, but when he had gone a little way he looked back to where

Collinswood stood and stared at the empty house. "Have your way and paint it," he muttered, "but it isn't your liver that is going wrong."

The next morning Collinswood called up Howell by telephone.

"Can you go through the McChesney house with me?" he asked. "I have the keys."

"I told you to let it alone."

"I sha'n't, so you might as well go with me."

"All right, then—at ten o'clock, and you can come back with me to luncheon."

Howell hung up the receiver and spoke to a gray-haired man who sat smoking by the open window.

"I want to show you something, Draper," he said, and opened a drawer and took out a square package. "What do you think of that?"

It was a small oil painting. On a dark, purplish background a snake reared its head. That was all, but the gaping mouth, the quivering fangs, the metallic gleam of the green-blue scales, the devilish glitter of the bead-like eyes, all these things intensified a frightful conception, and Dr. Draper studied it intently.

"It's ghastly, Howell," he said at last. "Who did it?"

"Who do you think?"

"Some neurotic—is it drink, drugs, or worse?"

"None of them. Overwork in Paris. The man is an artist, and he overworked and underfed—and that picture makes me afraid. He came into a small fortune recently, and can let up now, but the mischief has been done."

Draper eyed the little picture with disfavor. "He'd better stick to trees and flowers if he wishes to keep his balance."

"That's what I tell him, but he won't hear it. He has chosen the McChesney house for his next subject."

"The empty house?"

"Yes—by moonlight."

Dr. Draper uttered a sharp exclamation. "It's madness. You ought to tell him, Howell, that he must stick to normal things, to sunlight and open air."

"I am half-afraid to say anything to him," said the younger doctor. "He may dwell on his state and things will simply be precipitated."

"I should like to see him," said Draper.

"Come to luncheon today," said Howell. "I invited him with the hope that you would stay and see him, and give your opinion."

But when at the appointed time Collinswood came into Howell's office he announced a change of mind.

"I am not going through the house," he said.

"Why not?"

"Because my imagination can people it with spectres, and in reality I might come up against a flowered carpet and stuffed furniture."

"You are resolved to revel in horrors?"

"Yes; but I am not going to paint by moonlight. I got up early this morning—just at dawn. I couldn't sleep, and went over there, and the blackness of the night was fleeing before the gray of the morning. That is the time. I shall paint it then; it shall be a very nightmare of a picture." And he laughed excitedly.

Howell's even tones brought him back to calmness.

"Do you sleep well?"

"No."

"Let me give you something to make you sleep."

"I won't take it."

"You will regret it."

"Why?"

But Howell could not tell him. It is

not easy to tell a man he may go mad in a week, a month, a year.

"No wonder you conceive horrors," he substituted lamely, "when you lie awake all night. It's enough to make you morbid."

"Oh, morbid," said Collinswood; "that is the Puritan name for realism. They would limit a man's art to flowers and fruit and dead ducks on a slab. I can't see much difference between dead people and dead ducks when it comes to morbidness, and ghosts are more interesting to me than canvasbacks."

"You are hopeless," said Howell, and then Dr. Draper came in. The three talked on general subjects until luncheon was served.

In the afternoon Dr. Draper drove home thoughtfully. So absorbed was he that a young lady, who leaned over the gate by the driveway, had to call twice before he heard her.

"Daddy," she said reproachfully, as he finally drew rein, "daddy, you are getting dreadfully absent-minded."

"I have a queer case on hand," he said, as she climbed into his buggy, and dropped her golf-sticks at her feet.

"What is it?" she asked, and leaned forward eagerly while he told her of Collinswood.

The doctor's daughter was pleasant to look upon. She wore her hair in a shining knot on her neck. Her skin was smooth and creamy, her eyes clear and gray, her gown was of rose-pink linen, with the sleeves rolled back from her strong white arms, and the collar turned down from her firm young throat.

"What does he look like?" she asked practically, when her father had given her an outline of the case.

"Dark and dreamy. A little thin, but strongly built. A man who ought to be a perfect mine of reserve force, but with his manner marred just now by a dangerous excitability."

"Do you think he inherits a tendency to insanity?"

"No."

"Have you told him his danger?"

"No. It isn't safe to do it, Lucia. He would dwell on it and make things worse. Howell thought so, and I am sure of it since I have seen him."

"How will you treat him?"

"I haven't decided. But the first thing to do is to get him out of the idea of painting that house."

"I don't believe you will get him out of the idea, daddy," said Lucia. "It's the wrong way to go about it."

The doctor smiled, as inexperience with bronze locks dictated to experience and hoary hairs, but Lucia helped him often by her woman's wit, and he respected her theories, while sometimes doubting their efficacy.

"What would you do?" he asked.

And Lucia told him.

When she had finished, the doctor looked at her gravely.

"Be sure you don't leave him between Scylla and Charybdis," he warned, as they drove up to the door and stopped.

Her eyebrows went up in surprise. "How?"

"If he should fall in love with you."

"Please be sensible," said Lucia calmly. "I am not an artist's ideal, but I am healthy-minded and normal, if that is what you are looking for." And she jumped out of the buggy and ran up the steps.

## II

For a week Collinswood rose when darkness was still over the earth, and climbed up the bluff to the empty house. There he set up his easel and worked.

He painted the white columns and the staring windows, and dark crawling things on the steps and dark flying things in the gray mists, and then his imagination took him into the house, and horrid faces with gleaming eyes peered over the sills, or grinned from behind the pillars. And as he transferred the creatures of his brain to the canvas, he would tap his forehead and whisper:

"Empty—empty—empty house and

empty skull," and the words would die away in a moan or in a laugh that was worse than a moan.

When at last the sun rose, he would drop his brushes and throw himself on the dank grass and sleep until noon. Then he would go home, wild-eyed and haggard, to await the coming of another dawn.

Thus it happened that one morning as he lay with his pallid face upturned to the sky, a voice mingled with his uneasy dreams—a voice that sang:

"The year's at the Spring;  
The day's at the morn;  
Morning's at seven;  
The hillside's dew-pearled;  
The lark's on the wing;  
The snail's on the thorn;  
God's in His heaven—  
All's right with the world!"

That was Browning—but this was the first time he had heard it set to music. Half-dreaming, he lay and listened, and presently the song stopped, and the voice commanded,

"Careful, Mary Ann——"

Collinswood wondered who Mary Ann might be, and why she should be careful.

Then something soft and cold and wet snuggled into his neck, and he opened his eyes and looked straight into the panting jaws of a great setter, who rested her lumbering paws on his shoulder in friendly fashion and looked at him inquiringly.

Again the voice warned, "Careful, Mary Ann——" and Collinswood sat up.

On the porch of the empty house was a blot of rose-pink—that was his first artist's impression. Then he discovered that the rose-pink was the gown of a girl, and that she was sewing.

"Don't let me disturb you," she said placidly. "Mary Ann and I walk up the cliff every morning. It's good for my complexion, and good for her fat. She's a lazy old thing. And then we rest here before we start down. It's a nice old place, don't you think?"

Nice! To Collinswood it was a place of horror—a place to which he



was chained by the demands of a fevered imagination.

He stared at her with his haunting eyes, and said nothing. Then he reached for his brushes. Mechanically he mixed the cold colors that gave his picture the atmosphere of the supernatural—then his brush strayed to the rose madder. What a difference that girl made on the steps of the empty house, with the sunlight on her bright hair!

Presently she came down and stood near him.

"May I see your picture?" she asked; but he grew pale and covered it quickly.

"No—no," he stammered. Suddenly he became aware of the awfulness of the thing he had conceived, this house of dreadful dreams.

"Please," she urged, and leaned over and uncovered the painting; then drew back, shuddering.

"Oh, oh," she murmured. With all her youth and courage she was afraid. How could a man paint a thing like that—how could he—!

She looked at Collinswood with her grave eyes. "You have great genius," she said.

"What do you think of it?" he whispered. "What do you think of it?"

She shook her head. "I don't know," she faltered, "I don't know." And then she went away.

She came often after that, however, and at last he filled his brush with glowing color, and on the steps of the house there grew gradually a radiant figure.

He began to look for her, to forget in her presence the horrid hallucinations that possessed him, to dread her going.

Thus when, for two days, she did not come, he grew melancholy, and on the third day he blotted out the bright figure on the steps, and in its place he drew an awful shape that flitted through the gray mists, and when he had finished his face wore the look of a haunted man, and at last, worn out, he threw himself on the ground and slept.

When he awoke the sun was high in the heavens, and the girl nodded to him from an upper porch, from behind a row of bright geraniums in little pots.

"I am rummaging," she said. "I got the keys yesterday. Some day I am going to fix up the kitchen and invite you in. It's the coziest place—so old-fashioned." Then she drew back, but every now and then she came again to the porch to speak to him, or to give a command to Mary Ann who strayed into the bushes in yelping search for quarry.

Then for a half-hour Collinswood's brush rioted in pinks and greens and scarlet, and roses bloomed on the porch of the pictured house, a ray of sunlight broke through the darkness of the painted heavens, while a few vigorous strokes eliminated the snake to give a place on the path to the pudgy Mary Ann.

So intent was he on his work that he stared when Lucia came flying out of the house.

"Listen, listen!" she said. "Mary Ann has unearthed something. Hear her bark. Oh, catch her, catch her!"

She clasped her hands in excitement as a flying streak of black passed her, and Collinswood with one wild leap grasped Mary Ann's collar and held her back.

"It's a cat," said the girl, and stooped down and picked up the little trembling creature from a corner. "Poor little thing, poor little thing! No, no, go away, Mary Ann! Please hold her or tie her or something. Here is her chain."

So Collinswood fastened the protesting Mary Ann to a tree, and she dropped down with her nose between her paws and looked at her mistress reproachfully.

Lucia stroked the little cat. "She is half-starved, poor little thing," she said. "I wish I had something for her."

Collinswood looked at her like a man awakening from sleep. This transition from the weird influences of the early morning to the noise and laughter of the rescue, left him dazed.

Presently he fumbled in his pocket.

"I brought a sandwich with me," he said. "There is meat in it, I believe. Will she eat it?"

"Try her," said Lucia, and put the little cat in his arms.

At the smell of the food, the little trembling creature settled down and took the bits from his hand. Lucia watched them eagerly, and gradually the strained look left Collinswood's face, as the cat purred and tucked her soft head into his coat in search of food.

"Such a loving little pussy," he said, and his voice broke a little, as she curled up under his hand. It was so long since anything had seemed to care for him.

"Poor fellow," thought Lucia, observing carefully.

"It is working," said Lucia to the two physicians that night. "He can't think of horrors when he has Mary Ann and pots of geraniums and the sensible Miss Draper in the foreground. We are not weird, and he painted us in today along with the ghosts and other things."

"That is your idea, then," said Howell curiously, "that he shall be led away insensibly from the abnormal to the normal?"

"That's it," said Lucia. "You see, his hallucinations centre in that house—its emptiness and forlornness have got on his nerves. Now brighten up the house, and you may brighten him up—who knows?"

Howell looked at her as she stood, straight and beautiful and confident, behind her father's chair.

"Don't turn his head," he said, "or I shall have to send Mrs. Howell to chaperon you."

Lucia blushed rosily. "How silly!" she said, and went away with her head held high.

Her father looked after her.

"It is an interesting case," he said, "but there are dangers."

And remembering the blush, Howell agreed with him.

### III

THE next night it stormed. In the early morning the rain stopped, but the wind still blew wildly, so that it flung the cape of Collinswood's rain-coat over his head as he climbed the bluff.

Around the empty house the trees moaned and sighed. Everywhere was gloom—a gloom that pierced Collinswood's soul and brought despair.

He crouched beneath a tree and looked toward the house that haunted him.

"Why should I paint it?" he found himself asking. "Why should I paint anything? Why strive, strive—for nothing?" Then came the dark thought, "Why live—?"

In all his dreams this dream had never come before, and he shook with the horror of it. And yet it returned again and again. At last it took definite shape. There was the bluff, and at the foot of it they would find him—at the foot of the bluff.

As he cowered, quivering with the emotions that mastered him, he thought of Lucia. Lucia—that was her name, she had said. If she would come, if Lucia would come! Oh, if Lucia would come!

He was at the edge of the bluff now, looking down through the mists that hid the road below. His dark hair blew back from his white face, his hat was off, and the rain beat upon him.

Suddenly there was a rustle of leaves behind him and he turned with a start. The little cat was running along the path. Her head was held high, and in her mouth she carried something that she laid at his feet.

Collinswood stood staring wildly for a moment before he came back to realities, then with a sharp cry he bent down and examined the small object. It was a white kitten.

"Do you know what you have done, pussy cat?" he said presently in a hollow voice. "Do you know that you have saved a man from destruction—with your little white kitten?"

The little mother mewed plaintively;

then she ran back toward the house, and from underneath the steps she dragged two more white atoms, blind and squirming and wet with the rain that had dripped on them.

The rain came down in torrents. "We must find shelter, pussy cat," said Collinswood, and then he saw that the key was in the door of the empty house. He reached out his hand to turn the knob, but drew back with a shudder. What was in there? He could not face more horrors—in the darkness.

Then the door was flung open, and he heard a voice that seemed to bring him from hell to heaven.

"Come in, oh, come in!" Lucia urged.

As he stumbled across the threshold, she saw the little, anxious cat and the three kittens snuggled in the curve of his arm. "Oh," she said, "put them down here on this old rug, and I will give her the cream. No, no, Mary Ann, let them alone, or I shall shut you out. Do you hear me, Mary Ann——" Collinswood heard the words as if they came from afar off. He was gazing about him. This, then, was the inside of the empty house. The warm, cozy room with the open fire, with the table set for two, with a teakettle singing a home-like song, and with roses on the mantelshelf.

"Now you must have some coffee," said Lucia, and made him sit down at the table and eat and drink, while she chatted in her steady voice, although her heart trembled within her as she saw his wild looks.

She knelt in front of the fire to toast the bread, and the flames touched her cheeks with pink.

"I thought if you came up here this morning that you would be chilled through, and I told father I should cook breakfast for you. I fixed the room yesterday. Mary Ann and I have made a picnic of it, and here we are."

Collinswood pushed back his cup and went over and stood beside her.

"You came too late," he said dully, "but the little cat saved me—or the Providence that sent her."

Lucia looked up at him, startled, as something in his face told her what he had contemplated.

"You mean," she said slowly, "that you would have done that?"

"Yes."

"Oh," with her hands before her face, "oh——"

She was sobbing.

He passed his hand across his forehead. Something seemed to snap in his brain—something that had held him like a demon of darkness, and now the demon was cast out—forever.

He bent over Lucia as she still knelt in front of the fire.

"Do you pity me like that?" he asked.

She looked up. "Pity?" she cried uncertainly.

There was that in her eyes which made him catch his breath with the wonder of it.

"Lucia," he said, and there was a long silence.

All at once he straightened up and his voice rang out.

"Where is my picture?" he cried, and went out and brought it in from the out-house where he kept it.

"Look," he cried. "Look, Lucia!" And he picked up a knife from the table and drew it across the canvas. "Look!" he cried again, and slashed it in a dozen places and threw it into a corner.

"I am going to paint another," he said, "but this time I shall paint the house of happy dreams. There shall be roses in the garden and roses on the porch, and doves shall fly back and forth in the sunshine, and you—you shall sit among the roses in your rose-colored gown. Ah, Lucia, you will, Lucia?"

The note of joy in his voice uplifted her. His eyes were unclouded, their glitter gone.

"Will you, Lucia?"

"But——"

"Your eyes say it better than your lips."

"I had not thought of it."

"It is not your mind but your heart that must answer."

Never in all her sensible life had Lucia Draper been wooed like this.

She raised her frank eyes to his. "Wait a little," she faltered. "I seem to have thrust myself on you—I never expected this——"

"And yet you saved me from madness," he said gravely.

"You knew?"

"How could I help it? Howell would not tell me, but I knew that I was being swept on by an irresistible force, until you came and I began to see light. Don't send me back into the darkness—don't!"

"No," she breathed, "I will not."

A week later the two doctors sat together in Howell's office.

"Then you consider Collinswood cured?" said Dr. Draper to the younger man.

"Yes, he came in here yesterday looking as fit as a young colt. Every trace of his depression has gone, and he tells me that he will buy the McChesney house, fix it up and live in it. He is full of plans for window-boxes and rose-gardens and dove-cotes, and he doesn't seem to retain a tinge of the eccentricity that promised madness."

"It is Lucia who is mad," said Dr. Draper gloomily.

Howell looked up quickly. "How's that?"

"She is going to marry Collinswood," said Lucia's father.



## A PRAYER IN DEFEAT

By Arthur Stringer

**S**TILL hurl me back, God, if Thou must!  
Thy wrath, see, I shall bear—  
I have been taught to know the dust  
Of battle, and despair.

Bend not to me this hour, O God,  
Where I defeated stand:  
I have been schooled to bear thy rod,  
And still wait, not unmanned!

But should some white hour of success  
Sweep me where, vine-like, lead  
The widening roads, the clamoring press—  
Then I thy lash shall need!

Then, in that hour of triumph keen,  
For then I ask Thine aid;  
God of the weak, on whom I lean,  
Keep me then unafraid!

## THE ESTRANGING SEA

By Agnes Repplier

"God bless the narrow sea which keeps  
her off,  
And keeps our Britain whole within her-  
self."

SO speaks "the Tory member's  
elder son," in "The Princess":

"God bless the narrow seas!  
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad;"

and the trans-Atlantic reader, pausing to digest conservative sentiment, wonders what difference that would make. If the little line of roughened water which divides Dover from Calais were twice the ocean's breadth, could the division be any wider and deeper than it is? We Americans cross from continent to continent, and are merged blissfully into the old-world life. The "salt, estranging sea" has no power of severance for us. We do not resent the unfamiliar. Our attitude toward it is frankly receptive, and full of joyous possibilities. We take kindly, or at least tolerantly, to foreign creeds and customs. That Italians are Roman Catholics, that Frenchmen live out-of-doors, that Germans smoke in restaurants and railway carriages, are facts which fail to affront the American as they affront the British soul. Mr. Birrell, endeavoring to account for Charlotte Brontë's hostility toward the Belgians—who were really very kind to her—says that she "had never any patience" with Catholicism. The statement suggests irresistibly the retort of the Papal chamberlain to Count Herbert Bismarck, when that nobleman, being in attendance upon the Emperor, pushed rudely—and unbidden—into Pope Leo's audience chamber. "I am Count Herbert Bismarck," shouted

the German. "That," replied the urbane Italian, "explains, but does not excuse your conduct."

So much has been said and written about England's "splendid isolation," the phrase has grown so familiar to English eyes and ears, that the political attitude it represents is a source of pride to thousands of Englishmen who are intelligent enough to know what isolation costs. "It is of the utmost importance," says the *Spectator*, "that we should understand that the temper with which England regards the other States of Europe, and the temper with which those States regard her is absolutely different." And then, with ill-concealed elation, the writer adds: "The English are the most universally disliked race on the face of the earth."

Diplomatically, this may be true. Socially and individually, it is not. The English possess too many agreeable traits to permit them to be as much disliked as they think and hope they are. Even on the Continent, even in that strange tourist world where hostilities grow apace, where the courtesies of home are relaxed, and where everyone presents his least alluring aspect, the English can never aspire to the prize of unpopularity. They are too silent, too clean, too handsome, too fond of fresh air, too schooled in the laws of justice which compel them to acknowledge—however reluctantly—the rights of other men. There is distinction in the Englishman's quietude, and in his innate respect for order.

But why should he covet alienation? Why should he dread popularity, lest



it imply that he resembles other men? When the tide of fortune turned in the South African war, and the reports from Mafeking drove London mad with joy, there were Englishmen who expressed grave alarm at the fervid demonstration of the populace. England, they said, was wont to take her defeats without despondency, and her victories without elation. They feared the national character was changing, and becoming more like the character of Frenchmen and Americans.

It is doubtful whether the character of any strong nation has ever really changed; but this vivid apprehension lest it should be even modified is very English, and very insular. Sorbières, who visited England in 1663, and who deeply admired his hospitable hosts, admitted that they had a "propensity to scorn all the rest of the world." "We don't naturally hate the French," said Mr. Pepys with genial candor, and he would probably have resented a more friendly attitude on a Frenchman's part. Foreign opinion is at all times an imperfect diagnosis; but it has its value to the open mind. When an English writer in *Macmillan* says that French criticisms on England have "all the piquancy of a woman's criticisms on a man," the American—standing outside the ring—is profoundly amused by an assumption so simple and so sublime.

Granting that isolation may be "splendid" in big things, where a nation's sovereignty is involved, and her honor is at stake, there is no dignity in individual isolation amid strange and often delightful surroundings. Perhaps Americans are too adaptable, too pliable; but at least we can and do accept the reasonableness of usages which differ materially from our own. When Mr. Arnold scandalized his countrymen by the frank confession that he found foreign life "liberating," it meant that he refused to carry along with him his own private and home-wrought shackles. His mind leaped gladly to meet new issues and fresh tides of thought, and he took pleasure in the little happenings of every day

because they were un-English and unfamiliar. The traveler who "drags at each remove a lengthening chain," has scant conception of the joys of freedom.

In that caustic volume, "Elizabeth in Rügen," there is a pleasant description of the indignation of the bishop's wife, Mrs. Harvey-Browne, over what she considers the stupidities of German speech. "What," she asks with asperity, "could be more supremely senseless than calling the Baltic the Ostsee?"

"Well, but why shouldn't they, if they want to?" says Elizabeth densely.

"But, dear Frau X, it is so foolish. East sea! Of what is it the east? One is always the east of something, but one doesn't talk about it. The name has no meaning whatever. Now, 'Baltic' exactly describes it."

This is fiction, but it is fiction easily surpassed by fact—witness the English tourist in France who said to Sir Leslie Stephen that it was "unnatural" for soldiers to dress in blue. Then, remembering certain British instances, he added hastily: "Except, indeed, for the Artillery or the Blue Horse." "The English model," comments Sir Leslie Stephen, "with all its variations, appeared to him to be ordained by nature." Mr. Lowell speaks somewhere of that "divine provincialism" which is but ill replaced by a cosmopolitanism lacking in virtue and distinction. Perhaps this is England's gift. She has the qualities of her defects, and they make her the mighty thing she is. Ignoring, or failing to grasp the standards of alien races, she sets her own so high that we must raise our eyes to consider them. Her attitude towards the rest of mankind is aptly defined by Dr. Johnson's famous speech anent the Roman Catholics, whose theology some one was unwisely endeavoring to elucidate or defend. "In everything in which they differ from us," said Dr. Johnson, "they are wrong"—a comprehensive statement which closed up all the easy avenues of approach.

But so much is lost by a rigid application of one nation's formulas to another nation's behavior, and the things

that are lost are sometimes so inexpressibly charming. It is praiseworthy in an Englishman to carry his conscience—like his bath-tub—wherever he goes, for both articles are sadly in his way. The American who leaves his conscience and his tub at home, and trusts to being clean and good after a foreign fashion, has a much better time, and is not permanently stained. Being less cock-sure in the start about his standing with heaven, he is subject to reasonable doubts as to the culpability of other people. The joyous out-door Sundays of France and Germany please him at least as well as the shut-in Sundays of London, when the great city assumes what M. Taine has mournfully described as "the aspect of a vast, well-ordered cemetery." He takes kindly to Sunday trains, very kindly to Sunday concerts, enlivened, without demoralization, by beer, and has been seen on the Paris race-track. Whatever is distinctive, whatever is national, interests and delights him; and he seldom feels called upon to decide a moral issue which is not submitted to his judgment.

I was once in Valais, when a rude play was acted by the peasants of Vissoye. It was a devout performance, setting forth the conversion of the Huns to Christianity a great many hundred years ago, through the influence of a miracle vouchsafed to Zachéo, the legendary apostle of Anniviers. The little stage was erected on a pleasant hillside, the procession, bearing the cross, wound down from the village church, the priests from all the neighboring towns were present, and the pious Valaisans sang a solemn *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for the conversion of their land. It would be hard to conceive of anything less sportive or profane; indeed, only a deep religious fervor could have breathed life into so sermon-like a play; yet I had English friends, intelligent, cultivated, interested, who refused to go with me to Vissoye, because it was Sunday afternoon. They stood by their guns, and attended their own service in the drawing-room of the deserted little hotel at Zinal. They gained, I hope, the ap-

proval of their consciences, and they lost the experience of a lifetime.

Disapprobation appears to be a powerful stimulus to the Saxon mind. The heroic measures which it enforces command our respect, untempered by any rashness of emulation. The English, it would seem, never stop to ask themselves that fatal question, "Is it worth while?" When we think how many people in Great Britain left off eating sugar as a protest against slavery in the West Indies, we realize how the individual Englishman holds himself morally responsible for wrongs he is innocent of occasioning and powerless to redress. Hood and other light-hearted humorists laughed at him for drinking bitter tea; but he was not to be turned from his purpose by ridicule. Miss Edgeworth voiced the conservative sentiment when she objected to eating unsweetened custards; but he was not to be influenced by conservatism. The same spirit compelled him to express the vehemence of his sympathy for M. Dreyfus by staying away from the Paris fair of 1900. The English press loudly boasted that Englishmen would not give the sanction of their presence to any undertaking of the French government, and called attention again and again to their absence from the exposition. I was myself asked a number of times in England whether this absence were not a noticeable thing, but truth compelled me to acknowledge it was not. With Paris brimming over, like a cup filled to the lip; with streets and fairgrounds gaily thronged; with every hotel crowded, and every cab engaged; and with twenty thousand of my own countrymen clamorously enlivening the scene, it was not possible to miss anybody anywhere. Americans had also sympathized warmly with M. Dreyfus. They had declared, sometimes with tears and sometimes with laughter, that the trial was like the trial of the Knave of Hearts in "Alice in Wonderland"—there were wonderful points of resemblance. But it never occurred to them to stay away from the exposition, to lose the most beautiful and brilliant thing that Europe had to give, to deny

themselves the chance of seeing the masterpieces of modern art gathered together in one preëminently magnificent display, to forego what was at once a keen delight and a liberal education, because French militarism had triumphed temporarily over justice. The pretty adage, "*Tout homme a deux pays; le sien et puis la France*," is certainly true of Americans. They have to forgive France some of her many transgressions because they cannot keep away from her shores.

England's public utterances anent the United States are of the friendliest description. Her newspapers and magazines say the most flattering things about us. Her poet laureate—unlike his great predecessor, who disliked us very cordially—has praised us with such fervor that we ought in honesty to tell him we are not nearly so good as he thinks we are. We feel like the infant Leigh Hunt, who, being unduly commended by some amiable elders whispered to himself—pride struggling with remorse—"They little suspect that I'm the boy who said 'damn.'" An English text-book, recently published, explains generously to the school-boys of Great Britain that the United States should not be looked upon as a foreign nation. "It is peopled by men of our blood and faith, enjoys in a great measure the same laws that we do, reads the same Bible, and acknowledges, like us, the rule of King Shakespeare."

All this is very pleasant, but the fact remains that individual Englishmen express surprise and pain at our most innocent idiosyncrasies. They are frankness itself in correcting our pronunciation, in protesting against our misuse of words, in lamenting our nomadic habits, our shrill voices, our troublesome children, our inability to walk twenty miles, our liking for unwholesome—by which they mean seasoned—food. It is Dr. Johnson over again. In everything in which we differ from them, we are wrong. When I am reproved by English acquaintances for saying "through," or "elevator," or "trunk," or "baggage," or

"automobile," I cannot well defend myself by proclaiming that I read the same Bible as they do—for, maybe, after all, I don't.

The tenacity with which English residents on the Continent cling to the habits and traditions of their own country is pathetic in its loyalty and in its misconceptions. Their scheme of life does not embrace a single foreign custom, their range of sympathies seldom includes a single foreign aspiration. "An Englishman's happiness," says M. Taine, "consists in being at home at six in the evening, with a pleasing, attached wife, four or five children, and respectful domestics." This is a very good notion of happiness; no fault can well be found with it; but it does not embrace every avenue of delight. The Frenchman who apparently never goes home, who seldom has a large family, whose wife is his partner and helpmate, and whose servants are friendly allies rather than automatic menials, enjoys life also, and with some degree of intelligence. He may be pardoned for resenting the attitude of English settlers, who, exiled from their own country on account of the cruel cost of living in England, never cease to lament the unaccountable foreignness of foreigners. "Our social tariff amounts to prohibition," said a witty Englishman in France. "Exchange of ideas takes place only at the extreme point of necessity."

It is not under such conditions that any nation gives its best to strangers. It is not to the affronted soul that the art of France, the music of Germany, the loveliness of Italy make their sweet and powerful appeal. The Englishman who complained that he couldn't look out of his window in Rome without seeing the sun had a legitimate grievance; but if we want Rome, we must take her sunshine along with her beggars and her Catholicism. Accepted frankly, they will not mar our infinite content.

There is a wonderful sentence in "The Marriage of William Ashe," which subtly and with exquisite distinction embodies the protest of the most brilliant

of Englishwomen against her countrymen's mental isolation. Lady Kitty—French to her finger-tips—is reciting Corneille before the assembled guests in Lady Grosville's drawing-room. "Her audience," says Mrs. Ward, "looked at her with the embarrassed or hostile air which is the Englishman's natural protection against the great things of art." To write a sentence so caustic, so delicate, and so cleanly cut is to triumph over the limitations of language. Yet the reproach seems a strange one to direct against a nation which has produced the noblest literature in the world since the glories of Greece waned. To understand it, we must remember that to Mrs. Ward, as to Mr. Arnold, distinction of mind is always allied with a knowledge of

French felicities, with an appreciation of French art and letters, with an experience of French conversation. "Divine provincialism" had no halo in the eyes of the man who wrote "Friendship's Garland." He regarded it with impatience bordering on mistrust, and with mistrust bordering on fear. Perhaps the final word upon the subject was spoken long ago by an author far less read than even Mr. Arnold. England was severing her sympathies sharply from much that she had held in common with the rest of Europe, when Dryden wrote: "They who would combat general authority with particular opinion must first establish themselves a reputation of understanding better than other men."



## PETITION

By Constance Farmar

YOU placed me far and high and bade me stay  
 There in the dizzy ether pure, serene—  
 Ah! but since then how fair the Summer's day,  
 How wild night's winds have been!

You crowned me, it is true, but such cold state  
 The stars may bear, which have no human need;  
 Such royalty might nobler souls elate,  
 But I—have love to feed.

I saw the sunlight clasp the radiant land,  
 And smell the perfume from her myriad flowers.  
 You placed me far and could not understand  
 The grief of lonely hours.

Release me, and dethrone me! for my claim  
 To any honor is this—that I forego—  
 Ah! lest your very reverence cause me shame,  
 Love me, or let me go!

## THE NIGHT OF SOULS

By Robert Dunn

TAKI SAN was cook's boy in Nagasaki Hospital, where I lay with a broken ankle. A China pony had skidded me down a Manchurian mountain just before the Liaoyang battle, and I had been shipped back to Japan. My career as a war correspondent was over.

Whenever Taki San passed the door of my ward, he saluted as a white soldier should. "Very soon, me so'd'er," he would say.

Then, as a Jap gentleman, he bowed three times, each time lower than the last.

"Port Arthur go, very soon. Shoot Russki—so," and he raised an invisible rifle to his shoulder. His round and melancholy features grew sardonic as he smiled.

Weeks passed before I understood why Taki favored me with these salutes. He stopped before no other ward. Four times a morning, going to and fro to the store-room, he went through this military pantomime—his open shirt showing the solid bronze of his full chest, the neat disposal of neck tendons reaching to the very roots of his hair. And just so, smiling as if he were a child and satyr in one, and thereby telling and hiding the courage of his ancient race, would he go out and reinforce the corpses with Nogi at Port Arthur.

Thus, Taki San's enlistment was his and my secret. No others in the long white sick-house on the mountain knew that the bugle which kept us awake at night, as the reserves drilled below on the Honmoko rice flats, was often tooted and excruciatingly tooted by Taki. Miss Greene, head nurse, never suspected that Taki would prob-

ably die for Mustushito, his Emperor, any more than Mr. Mustushito did, as he drove about Tokio in a yellow-wheeled French coupé, below grooms with cockades on their slick hats. And least of all was Haru San aware.

And this was strangest of all, for Taki San and Haru loved each other.

This I had discovered the night before, when I heard whispers behind the blue screen placed each evening to shield me from the open ward. Intent and suspicious, I listened. Soon the voices seemed to blend, as if coming from the same lips. They were familiar voices. Then the light in the lantern outside cast one double shadow on the screen. I heard no kiss. The Japanese do not know how to kiss.

The love of these two explained two things; Taki's secret soldiering and the selection of me, the person nearest Haru, to confide in.

Why shouldn't a Japanese lover be just as shy about giving his sweetheart pain in saying, "I am going to the war to die," as you, being a lover, might be shy yourself? Maybe this warrior race needs no fierce womanly devotion to goad it on to sacrifice. I pondered, remembering that when Taki would peer into my room to salute, Haru always sat unmoved in her corner, intent on Kuroda's "First English Reader."

So I said to Taki, when Haru was away at tiffin, "You no have told Haru you go to fight Port Arthur?"

The childishness crept from his smile. The slant eyes remained sardonic, though suffused by a little tenderness.

"No, she no need know," said Taki San.

Haru was a tiny woman with a round



chin, chubby cheeks, and eyes that seemed to laugh or weep, according to your own mood. She wore a tall poke cap fluted all around the edge, a white apron, and straw sandals with socks that had chambers for each toe. She knew hardly any English, bringing me medicine when I asked for blankets, flowers when I meant books; pottering around, over-zealous to please, squeaking "Hi! Ee-ee!" in apology and incomprehension.

On the night of the Sha-Ho victory a great celebration was held. What in Japan is called a band was passing the hospital. A dozen youths in scarlet and khaki, eleven with flutes, one with a bass drum, were rendering a night-mare distortion of a national hymn.

A shadow suddenly leaped upon the night-screen, and the lithe figure of Taki appeared in the darkness by my bed. He carried a paper bundle, which he hurriedly opened. Off he whipped his white apron and his tight-kneed blue jumpers. In a moment, Taki—five feet of living bronze—was rifling the heap of clothes at his feet. He dressed like lightning in the regiments of a private, even to the brown leggings, scarlet shoulder-straps with the number of his division, and visored cap, with broad, yellow crown, and a star. I rose in bed.

"Very sorry. I beg your pardon. You no sleep?" he said quietly, without bowing. "My band go by. You hear? Tomorrow go Tokio. To war." He was a soldier now, and neither cook nor gentleman.

"You're not going to let Haru San see you in those clothes?" said I. I knew that the Jap soldier leaves mother and sweetheart dry-eyed as he goes to war, and had grown to dread seeing such restraint between Taki and Haru.

"She no die seeing me, I guess," Taki answered carelessly; and it shot through me how different in such crises are the ways of our races.

He left me hurriedly with a word of farewell and ran to follow the flutes and the drum.

Soon Miss Greene, going her rounds, poked her ruddy head over the screen.

"And how are *you*, tonight? Now hear all that fuss. You *can't* control these Japs. Such a silly people," she sighed.

I told her the romance that had been going on around us and extracted from her a promise not to report Taki San's mutiny to the hospital committee.

Next day we saw Haru, but no Taki San. He had left for Tokio to join the reserves, the undisciplined peasants and fisherfolk, now relentlessly called out to refill the trenches at Port Arthur. As Haru sat in her corner copying the English alphabet, I followed Taki San in my mind, speeded by the same barbarian flutes to the gray stone railway station. There would be fire-crackers and red-eyed coolies shouting "Banzai!" and again "Banzai!"

But Haru San's mind was nowhere but on her English reader. Marvelous people!—so much greater than we in self-control. I was thinking that in five days Taki would be under the hills of Port Arthur, where, as a reserve, his life would be held most lightly. I guessed that Taki's mother and sister had given him quite as joyful and tearless a send-off as I; and fancied them gossiping behind their cedar slats, quite as if Taki were still in the hospital kitchen.

"These Japanese have no sense of responsibility or honor," complained Miss Greene over the screen that evening. "Think of Taki leaving without giving me notice. They haven't the least idea of honesty."

I said nothing, but glanced at Haru San.

She only turned her page.

## II

Soon after this I left the hospital, only to return four months later; this time with blood poisoning in the broken leg.

Taki seemed to be forgotten.

Neither Miss Greene nor Haru San ever mentioned his name. I had been drawn into the ways of his race, and

had given him up for dead, since he had gone out to die. And Haru thought of nothing but her English grammar, in which she had made astounding progress.

I was very ill; sometimes delirious. The crisis of the war passed dimly before me. I heard that two Russian torpedo-boat destroyers had escaped from Port Arthur, and Miss Greene was disturbed about our safety. The vessels might arrive in our harbor at any time, she said, and I had difficulty in calming her fears.

After the fall of Sungshushan, which sealed the fate of Port Arthur, there was a great celebration. When it was at its height, Miss Greene said to me, "This is the Night of Souls. The Japanese say that tonight the spirits of the dead return to their children and to those they loved."

"Yes, the Night of Souls. Everyone will soon go to the temples," I said in my pain of fever. "They'll lay out the old clothes of the dead. Charon—or whoever the Japs' fellow is—will do a great business tonight on return tickets."

"Do you know," said Miss Greene, "that Haru has disappeared? There was a *gogai*\* out tonight. I saw her reading it. I haven't been able to find her since. She's gone away somewhere. For the last month she's been getting more and more impossible." "Our old friend Taki is certainly dead," I announced.

"Poor girl!" said Miss Greene.

"But isn't death the best thing?" I argued peevishly. "If he's alive, he either ran away, or he's a prisoner—you know their way. He can't come back, anyhow. For Haru to see him now would be the worst disgrace. Of course, he'd have to kill himself. When he leaves for war, he's given up as dead to start with. Excellent way! Incentive to bravery! We whites ought to have some such plan."

How long I talked on I do not know, but later on in the night I heard a pebble thrown against my window. I stumbled out of bed and saw a man on

the veranda. I raised the sash, and in a second a dark figure was hanging limp upon the ledge. I helped him in. He soon fell exhausted upon the floor. I saw that he was clad in the big visored cap and splay jacket of a Russian private, but he was surely no soldier of the Czar.

Then he breathed deeply, rose to his feet, seized both my arms, and cried, "Through!—Me. Through."

"Taki San!" I cried.

His uniform was damp and torn. What did it mean? I questioned him, and managed to draw out his story.

Taken a prisoner, he had been shipped out of Port Arthur in one of the Russian vessels that had so worried Miss Greene. No guard had been placed over him, except to see that he got no sharp weapon, as the Japs have a way of preferring suicide to facing their countrymen after the humiliation of imprisonment. But Taki was an exception. He had wriggled through a port-hole, and swam ashore when the ships had reached our harbor.

"You meant to drown yourself, of course?" I said.

He shrank from me, trembling as he sobbed. "I no can dare. I love—I love Haru."

Never have I seen such abject shame. He had outraged his race's most sacred honor in returning to lay eyes on parents and sweetheart. He was a traitor to that strange principle of his people's unearthly bravery—that principle which lays failure on the field to cowardice, for which sin a self-inflicted death is the only expiation.

"You must see Haru San. You came to see her," I said determinedly, —for we Westerners are fain to believe that the greatest thing in the world is love.

He reached for an old Samaurai sword which was hanging on my wall. I watched him, fascinated. He had the weapon poised to make the first horizontal cut of *hara-kari*, when I seized it from his hand.

"Haru thinks you're dead, anyhow," I said. It angered me that

\*Newspaper extra.  
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just as Taki returned to his love he only sought to end his life.

"She's in some temple now, waiting for your worthless soul. It's your Night of Souls, I believe?"

"Haru make me swim," he retorted bitterly. "For her I—I love," he groaned.

Thus he charged her whom he loved with being the cause of his shame.

But the life and happiness of two beings were at stake. I could not forsake him now. If he was blind to the nobility of love, he might yet respond to an appeal to his patriotism, which, to the Jap, is the greatest passion of all.

I recollect explaining how unjust it was to call a coward one who had tried his best in war, and failed; how to demand death at one's own hands in such a case as the only path of honor, was worse than cowardice. I condemned all Japan's magnificent courage in war as based upon false pride. I insisted that since Taki was alive, it mattered not why he lived; his first duty was to those he loved.

"You people want to be like us, and can't," I said. "You map your battles like us, work our guns, our wireless, and our torpedoes, but that alone won't put you with us. You've stolen our brains, but you haven't got our souls."

He ruminated for a minute or so. "The Night of Souls," he said. "And Taki San—he come home."

I saw that I had moved him. "It's never brave to kill oneself. You're all wrong, boy. You fall on your swords, and we Westerners laugh at you. To stand with us, you must have our hearts. You must love as we do, and give up all to that love."

He stared at me intently. The old look of childishness crept into his smile.

"You no think I understand?" Taki said at last in a whisper, "Bring Haru. I give all up."

I arose in triumph—to see a human shadow on the screen. Haru San stood before me. Her little eyes showed clear between the chubby cheeks, which were wet with tears.

She looked Taki full in the face without speaking. A calm smile made her beautiful.

"He no have wound?" she said at last, quite without a tremor.

I shook my head. Her self-possession amazed me. It was sublime. I waited for her to take a step toward him, to utter some cry, to relax her unearthly smile. I waited in vain. And Taki gazed at her quite as calmly.

"Haru San," I said trembling. "Go to him. He wants you. Taki has come back from the war."

"No! no! no!" said Taki with sudden revulsion, covering his face with his hands. "Get out—get out—I no can!"

He had not the courage, when it came to the test, to renounce the traditions of his ancient race. The living man wanted to see with our Western eyes, but at the crisis, his ancestors struck him blind.

He reached for my sword, his hands still over his eyes.

"Go to him, Haru San," I whispered. "I cannot stop him any more."

Still smiling, she gravely shook her head.

I remember feeling that I had trespassed further than was my right into the stony philosophy of these Orientals. Whether Taki lived or not, concerned only the poor bewildered thing I had thought he loved, thought had loved him. She was the sole judge in this clash of East and West.

At last she spoke. Taki had the sword poised hideously, but I do not think she saw it. At least she did not try to save him. She spoke to me slowly:

"I no find him soul in Honmoko temple. So I know when Taki soul come back this night, it come to ho'pital—to you, him friend. See, he come—he come."

Dimly I understood. To her mind, Taki could be here honorably only if wounded, and dishonor could not stain the man she loved. If alive, he would now be entering Port Arthur triumphantly. Evidently he was not there. And he was not wounded. So, seeing his body here, she believed him dead.

It was his soul which on that dread and mysterious night had returned to comfort and assuage her.

"You think him soul can hurt himself with sword?" she asked me. "You think him soul can hear when I speak?"

Taki fixed on her a sheepish gaze; and the sword dropped noisily to the floor.

"I am dead," he said to her. "It is the Night of Souls."

Haru beamed at me.

"Come," whispered Taki San, closing his eyes and sinking to the floor.

I watched Haru San take a blanket from the chair, tiptoe toward the window, and wrap it around him.

When I awoke in the morning, the blanket was empty, but Haru San sat in her corner, buried in her English reader—a third reader, mind you.

Taki San came to the door with his

inevitable tub of rice. His right arm was bandaged below the elbow. He made no soldier's salute, but bowed thrice, like a Jap gentleman, and passed on down the corridor.

Later in the day, when Miss Greene came in, I asked her what the matter was with Taki's arm.

"The head cook says that he saw Taki jab it with a meat-axe. Taki bandaged it himself, but Haru San and all the nurses think it's a wound he got at Port Arthur."

At this moment Haru San entered. "Why you no tell me last night Taki San was wounded?" she asked, when Miss Greene had gone. "Haru no can love coward, but wounded man all right."

And I smiled at the credulity of love, while Haru bent once more to a careful perusal of Kuroda's "Third English Reader."



## ONE DAY AT DUSK

By Maisie Shainwald

ONE day at dusk, in a pale candle's glow  
 You will sit, dreaming of the songs I sung  
 In praise of you when you were fair and young,  
 Before life's lights began to flicker low;  
 And, musing thus, mayhap the tears will flow  
 That I am gone, and suddenly your tongue  
 Will move to murmurous love-words that have clung  
 From rhythms that you were deaf to, long ago.

For age will have forgot youth's empty pride,  
 And needs must weep those buried days once more—  
 With all the ungarnered sweetness that they bore—  
 Nay, weep not: I was mortal, and I died,  
 But Love forever in my songs shall bide,  
 Wing-tipped with passion's crimson, as of yore!

## CALLUM

By Mary Heaton Vorse

**A**MONG the things that I never cease wondering over is how we, without any fault of our own, are made the cat's-paw of fate, by what tricks of chance we become the unwitting instruments which make and unmake our fellowmen. You introduce two people, they marry and live unhappily ever after; a friend joins you and walks down the street with you and the cable-car runs over him. There's no end to the tragedies you have helped make and no end either to the good you have done, and the thought of it all makes our lightest acts seem to us of importance, weighty, almost august, since we have the power to affect so greatly those about us. And when you consider the things you don't know you have done, the dramas for which you have touched the Spring and gone away as unconscious as a child——!

All this brings me around to Callum whom I met so casually a few times, a bare half-dozen in all, if you don't count the times we nodded each other a good evening from across a restaurant, and yet in whose little story I played such an important part, for it was I who with the lightest heart and the most unthinking head in the world handed over to Callum the key which opened so many doors to him. As I write about him I feel as if I had known Callum all his life; you had only to look on Callum's broad face and honest smile to see his whole past life. You knew what sort of people he came from—for you could be sure Callum had people, lots of them, brothers and sisters, a God-fearing father and a placid, stout mother and any number of placid, stout aunts. Oh, Callum belonged to the sinew of our

land, and came from the backbone of the Plain People if ever a man did.

He sat next me the night of our first meeting at Annunciata's long table and shoved the massive bowl of *minestrone* toward me—facetiously called by the habitués, "the garbage."

"Say," he remarked, "that's a corking soup. I never saw one with so many different things in it. Now some people don't relish a soup like this—I think it don't look clean, sorter—but I do. I like a soup where you don't always know just what you're eating." He said this with pride, as though it implied a wide cosmopolitan soul not to insist on knowing just what you're eating. Here he helped himself to the grated cheese with a concious air. He put in enough to give his soup the consistency of a Welsh rabbit.

"Say," he went on, "takes a foreigner to think o' stunts like this. Cheese in soup—it's great! I'd just like to get some cheese in my Unc' Henry's soup without him knowing what 'twas. My Unc' Henry, he's awful particerlar 'bout his food. When he goes to a restaurant won't order hardly anything but a slice o' roast beef. Says he wants to know what he's eating.

"You care more about *knowin'* what you're eatin', I says to him, 'than *tastin'* what you're eatin'. Th' better things is cooked, generally, less you can tell what's in 'em. Now anybody can cook a piece o' beef so you'd know it for beef, but it takes a real cook to fix it up so you'd have to guess again. What you care about *knowin'* what you're eatin', s'long's it tastes good?' That's what I keep sayin' to him." Then, lest he seem disloyal to Uncle Henry, he



added in defense of him, "Unc' Henry never went round much as a boy—that's what's the matter with him. I tell you what wakes a man up's going round."

I agreed with him heartily that going around did indeed wake one up. I implied also that my companion had evidently been around enough and to spare.

"That's right," he agreed heartily, helping himself from the pint bottle of purple ink which we dignified at Annunciata's by the name of wine. He held his glass up to the light, cocking his head on one side with innocent affectation; then he became absorbed in the scene around him and conversation languished. Dinner wore on to dessert—an anemic banana which sat in brooding melancholy over a pinch of moth-eaten almonds. Some of the people—"parties," I dare say Callum would have called them—at another table grew a trifle hilarious; one knew they felt in duty bound to become hilarious—why else come to table-d'hôtes? Some of the ladies were induced to take a cigarette; the air of the little basement became smoke-laden. My friend drank it all in.

"Say," he broke out, "this is the real thing—you bet! The real thing! I don't come here because it's cheap. I come here because it's in little places like this you get the real thing. You can see cheap sports anywhere West or East, but you can't be bohemian anywhere, no matter how much you want to. You've got to come to places like this if you want to see bohemia." His eyes glowed with an honest enthusiasm.

I, personally, had come to Annunciata's because it was cheap, and because it was near my rooms, and although Annunciata's was then in the height of its fame—not yet "spoiled," as I understand it became later, though exactly what could have been done to spoil it I never quite understood—I was not young enough in heart to have any illusions about its bad food or its "bohemianism." The doors of the real bohemia open only to the pure in heart, for bohemia is a subjective affair, a

matter of the imagination, and I knew that poor Callum, his broad sanguine face abeam, was nearer the Elysian fields than any of the people about us who were playing their dreary, greasy little farce, which is called "being bohemian."

I had been interested by his theory of cooking, and his enthusiastic acceptance of Annunciata's as the "real thing" touched me. He noticed that I bowed to one or two people as they came in, and I let him draw me out. One of my acquaintances was an artist, it happened, and another a writer, and at this information Callum became, as near as his solid weight permitted, "all of a flutter."

"You're a real bohemian, I guess. I'm bohemian, too, as much as a man like me can be. But it takes an author or an artist to be it," he exclaimed admiringly.

I assured him that he was every bit as bohemian as I, if not more so, and that there were plenty of business men as bohemian as bohemian could be—the gentleman who was the life of the next table, for instance, he was only a business man when he wasn't a bohemian; and I went away envying my companion the vision which saw poetry and romance and gaiety in the shabby little table-d'hôte.

I went away, but before I left I did him what I thoughtlessly supposed was the kindness of introducing him to Mr. Quipley, the prince of Annunciata's—bankrupt hardware merchant and bohemian, thus touching the button that rang up the curtain on Callum's drama. Perhaps it was a kindness, after all. In spite of all that happened, Callum got out of life what he wanted, and that is the principal thing, isn't it, and more than most of us can say for ourselves?

It was some weeks before I saw him again. I had installed myself in a newly "discovered" restaurant. I had been seated only a few minutes when Callum came in, heading a party of four other people, two women and two men. The girls I recognized as two performers who had been at the Quipley table

the night I met Callum. At sight of me Callum hailed me as an old friend. He seated his party and came over to me.

"C'm' over to my table," he said. "Oh, come on," as I would have refused. "I've got two awfully chick girls over there. You gotta come. If it hadn't been for you I'd never have known any of 'em—never dared to speak to 'em. But say, they're a straight crowd; took me right in 'sif I'd known 'em always—and but for you—oh, come along over."

I came over; there was nothing for it but that, and it was then I first saw, but only dimly, that I had played fate's cat's-paw in Callum's life.

One of the "chick" young ladies was an American-French girl as meagre and black and active as a shiny flea; she wore her clothes with the intelligent aplomb of her race. That Cora, the other "chick" young lady, was "chick," and not the handsome, lazy sloven the devil intended her to be, was to be laid at the door of her little dark friend; as it was, their hats were put on at as rakish an angle as possible, there was a great deal of crackling silk, of voluminous feather boa about them. It was my little French girl who was the life of the party. She spoke nasal, twanging, New York newsboy English, with I know not what teasing French accent. Cora did not trouble to talk at all. She looked across the table, her lovely greedy eyes first on me, then on Callum. She tolerated the other men—but tolerated them good-naturedly. Her whole careless attitude seemed to say that she, for one, didn't need to go hop, skip and jump over the earth's surface; she had only to sit still and be handsome. Her sensual, red mouth was neither weak nor cruel, and she applied herself to her dinner with the hearty frankness of a healthy child. She made up faces over the *vin ordinaire* and, calling the waiter, developed a surprising knowledge of Italian wines, and when she had gotten the best there was she drank tranquilly, steadily, on the whole sparingly, and neither the excess of food nor the sufficiency of drink made her creamy skin one shade

pinker. One could see before her a long, happy life unmarred by nerves or exertion. Indeed, in all my life I have seen few people who more entirely fulfilled the scriptural recommendation to consider the lilies. Both ladies supported life by song and dance specialties in the smaller vaudeville shows in the Winter and on the beaches or at "Coney" in Summer.

Angelique, facetiously called the Angel, had ambitions; wide-reaching, furious ambitions, which included in their scope Cora.

"If I could make her work," she cried, her impossible accent ringing out shrill, "I could make our fortunes. She's lovely—lovely all over, and she's not as stupid as she seems. If only she'd work!" She pronounced it "woik," and at the same time threw her hands up, hunching shoulders to ears with a gesture indescribably Gallic.

"I am working," Cora drawled, "working Uummy, for all I'm worth. He's a good thing and I'm pushing him along." She patted Callum's arm affectionately. Callum was beaming; it seemed to him that if anyone had ever reached the heart of bohemia he had. He looked on the Angel's wise, grotesque little face with something near reverence, and it seemed to me he looked on Cora with something like adoration. We had a pleasant evening, the easy joviality of the other men, the gaiety of the Angel, who hadn't one good feature beside her yellow and somewhat tarnished youth, and the very real beauty of Cora, together with Callum's naive delight—oh, it was distinctly an evening which "went."

As we passed out Callum dropped behind with me.

"She's great, Cora—they're both great; but Cora, she's a winner. She don't care about fame or anything, she just likes a good time. I tell you, when you've lived all your life among a lot o' women who worked *fierce*—all the time whether there was anything to do or not, regular hustlers—you appreciate the other kind."

Callum's opinions were all so excellent that there was never any possibil-

ity of differing with them, so I said my usual, "Yes, he was right."

"Cora's a good girl, too," he went on, "just as good—better too—than if she'd lived right under her mother's wing and gone to prayer meeting Friday nights. I tell you, when a woman's been out in the world and seen all she has and is as good as you make 'em on top o' that—you have a respect for a woman like that."

But this time I didn't answer, for I had my own ideas about the goodness of Cora.

"The Angel told me all about her," he went on; "Cora didn't say anything, but there! you've only to look at Cora to see what *she* is."

And indeed there was no vice in Cora's lovely face, but instead a certain unwritten innocence that at the same time had nothing to do with purity, and while when I looked at Cora, I saw, well—an entirely different order of things than Callum did—still he wasn't after all the fool he seems in the telling to have swallowed whole the charmingly embroidered tale that the Angel had made for him, and I wondered what it was that the little, astute lady had in her mind.

It seemed that the fates were going to spare me no step of the comic little tragedy that I was responsible for, and it wasn't long before I found myself again in Callum's company at dinner. Cora was working in a show of sorts, and there was nothing for it but that I must go with Callum to see her.

I don't know whether she had real talent or not; I'm no connoisseur in the points of soubrettes, but there was no denying her beauty. She was, as the Angel said, "lovely all over," as we had ample opportunity of judging; not with the gross beauty of a merely handsome, healthy animal, but with all sorts of refinements in detail; the type of woman who, with only a flash of the devil which gleamed out of Angelique's eyes, would have been maddening; the kind of woman to commit follies for. But there was no devil about her, she wore her nakedness with the unconsciousness, the lack of suggestiveness that

a virtuous old woman wears her pelisse, and her undress was, in the face of her unconscious carriage, almost modest.

Cora had been raised for this kind of work; she had been, one might say, born on the stage. At five she had been a child wonder, and she had the aplomb that only that sort of training could have given her. She slouched on the stage, lazy, good-tempered, entirely beautiful, and made friends at once with her audience. She was as at home with them as with "Ummy" and the Angel over the dinner-table; and, without putting herself out for them more than for us, they were with her from the first. "We're all here to amuse ourselves together," her attitude seemed to suggest, and it was the little personal touch, the jolly of it, that delighted her people. There may have been no art about the girl's performance, but neither was there any artificiality. She was so perfectly herself, so without smirking, the lazy, good-tempered girl who "obliged the company" at Annunciata's because it was too much trouble to refuse, that her performance through its simplicity and lack of effort gave the effect of originality; and I was inclined to agree with the Angel that she could go very far—if she chose to give herself the trouble. But if I was pleased with Cora, Callum was taken off his feet. "She's great," he kept repeating; "she's a wonder! She can have me! She's great!"

"She's great," he repeated to the Angel who at that moment joined us in the stuffy hole dignified by the name of box.

"You've seen what I mean," the Angel cried, her dark eyes flashing. "Now you see, don't you? Think of her playing here—for nothing—yes, nothing, when she could be the Whole Thing if she wanted to! You could make her; you're a business man. You've got the stuff. You could go round and do the work for her—take an' make her work. Why, she's Broadway star stuff; that's what Cora is!"

In the half-light of the box Callum's face looked like a jocular red moon.

He digested the Angel's impassioned appeal. Then:

"What's the use," he asked, "of making folks do what they don't want to?"

The Angel had one of her despairing gestures, wiry arms raised to heaven, shoulders up to her ears. Callum adored these gestures; he watched for them—I had caught him at it—he got out of them, I suppose, one of the bohemian thrills he was so keen after.

"See here," Callum went on, "folks all my life've been trying to make me do all sorts of things I didn't want to—and I'm not going to begin now on Cora."

"She'd like well enough being it, once she'd got there," the Angel flashed.

"Oh, what's the use?" Callum answered placidly. The Angel could rage and storm—she made me think of a fierce and angry monkey; I expected any moment to see her run up the side of the box and chatter furiously at us from over the hideous cornice—she couldn't move Callum. He remained as placid as the side of a house. What he liked was things as they were, and part of Cora's charm was her indifference to all the things the Angel was chattering about.

Some two weeks went by without my seeing Callum and his "lady friends." As I entered the little "joint" on MacDougal street, he waved his napkin at me like a true bohemian, and called to me.

"Cora 'n' I are going to be married," was the amazing news that he had for me.

"Married?" I echoed stupidly.

Cora lifted her lovely eyes to mine. She had caught the wonder in my voice.

"That's what I say, too—what's the use of getting married?"

"What's the use of getting married?" Callum burst into loud peals of mirth; his wide shoulders shook until I feared for the buttons on his waistcoat. "What's the use of getting married, she says to me." It seemed to him the greatest joke he had ever heard.

"He doesn't think I mean it," Cora

explained gravely. "He thinks I'm joking." Callum roared, but Cora was in earnest for all Callum's laughter. "But I don't see any good in it," Cora went on. "What's the use of having fusses when you don't need to? There'd be trouble anyway—wherever there's men there's trouble. But when you're married there's more of it and it lasts longer."

"Ain't she the limit?" Callum choked out.

"You bet she's the limit," the Angel joined in. "You make me sick, Cora. 'Tisn't every day that a lazy dub like you can get a white man like Uummy to marry you."

Callum, past speech, waved a paw at the two women. They had touched on the uttermost bounds of humor.

"Oh, Uummy's white all right, all right," said Cora, sober eyes on him. "'Tisn't that I don't like Uummy that I think getting married's foolishness."

"Oh, can't you shut up?" the Angel gave out wearily. "It's the best thing that ever happened to you."

It was to be my fate that night to hear the love song of Callum. The Angel broke up the party early, and Callum and I walked home with "the girls," who lived near, and it was after we had left them that he broke forth in his love song. It was spoken in a villainous Western dialect; it was besprinkled with barbarous pieces of slang, but in Callum's phrase it was "the real thing"; all the simplicity and loyalty and faith of the man was in his grotesque, broken, half-articulate rhapsody, and Cora was transformed in the moment; even in my clear-seeing eyes, she became beauty, purity, love, romance, the queen of queens, the pearl of pearls.

I am glad that I had the grace to be sorry for myself, instead of for Callum, and to envy him his roses and nightingales. I was abashed in my friend's presence and in the presence of the glorified Cora he evoked. Since he believed her to be what he did, mysteriously she was that woman for a moment at least, and I went away, after Callum had wrung my hand, with a

heaviness in my heart that Callum's moon-lit garden of romance was a closed door for me.

I am not sorry for those who must leave paradise as much as for those who only now and then look through the gate, and who never can go in.

When you consider how very few times, after all, I had seen Callum, what happened next seems to me undeserved. Heaven knows I didn't want to be continually on the inside of his affairs. Months had gone by without my having seen him or Cora—four, to be accurate. I hadn't, indeed, laid eyes on him since the party he gave on a return from their honeymoon. It was with malice aforethought, too, that I kept out of their way. I had seen Callum at his great moment, and I felt a certain delicacy at watching the sordid heartbreaking denouement. I knew well enough, or thought I did, what would happen, and I didn't want to watch Callum's confusion, his doubt, his final disillusion, the more that I couldn't, absurdly enough, keep from feeling that some way or other I was responsible for the whole thing. But just what I was responsible for and for how much, I didn't care to have rubbed in. But I wasn't to escape. I was walking up Broadway when I all but ran into Cora. She was beautifully dressed—by Angélique, I made no doubt—she was fatter, and there was a little expression of discontent on her face, which I had hitherto seen only placid and good-tempered.

"I've been looking for you, everywhere; I've tried every way I know to get hold of you," she began without preamble. "You've got to come and lunch with me. I'll blow you." There was not a dramatic note in her lazy drawl, nothing imperious in her manner, but there was no room left for doubt whether I was going to lunch with Cora or not, and I prepared meekly to do what I was bid.

"We'll lunch," she went on, with lazy succinctness, "at Corting's. Call a hansom." As we got in, "Ummy," she explained, "is rich as pie—gives me fifty per for clothes an' things," and

then she leaned back peacefully, and didn't speak again until she ordered luncheon with loving care. It was more rococo than the luncheon I should have ordered, but I couldn't deny that it showed knowledge. We waited for luncheon to come, Cora sprawling quite charmingly across the table, and letting me take the whole burden of the conversation. They were living, it seemed, in a flat, on the furnishing of which "Ummy" had spent incomprehensible sums of money. Angélique had ecstatically helped him.

"We never dreamed what a wad he had," Cora informed me. "He didn't think it was sporty to let us know—share in Unc' Henry's business—refrigerators—a salary beside—an' a percentage on the New York office." She recited it off proudly. "Ummy" was away a good deal on business. Then the Angel stayed with Cora and scolded her.

"She says I ought to amuse myself more; she says why can't I like to go shopping like other women. But I don't; I just hate shopping." There was a faint note of discouragement in her tranquil drawl.

Meantime, as we waited, I wondered if we ever were coming to the reason of why Cora and I were lunching together, for she had quite convinced me before we came that it was for the weightiest of reasons. Then, when I was ready to ask her point blank, she let me hear it in her own way.

"This'll be one of the few regular good feeds I'm going to have," she remarked, her fork hovering pensively midway between plate and mouth.

I asked "Why?" as I was expected to do.

"Because," replied Cora, "I'm going to quit!" She laid down her fork, and looked at me, calm-browed, level-eyed, and, as I gazed at her in astonishment, "Quit Ummy for good and all, I mean," she vouchsafed as an explanation. "And you've got to be the one to break it to him! You're the only one of his kind I know. That's why I wanted to see you."

She took up her fork and went on eat-



ing with relish the excellent, if too complicated, lobster, and continued to eat unmoved, while I tried to make her understand that not for anything in the world would I mix myself up in her domestic affairs, and as I became ironic she became more detached. She acted, indeed, as if she had now washed her hands for good of a somewhat trying business that had been wrongfully foisted on her shoulders.

"You've got to do it," was all she replied.

"And what reason, may I ask, am I to give Callum for this?" I inquired with what was intended for fine sarcasm.

"That's up to you," replied Cora, tranquilly. "Tell whatever you think'll be easiest for him."

"And may I make bold to ask what your reason is?"

Cora considered a moment. Then she lifted her eyes to mine with her greedy, childish gaze.

"I ain't good enough for Ummy," she announced simply.

"And so you're leaving everything"—I included the restaurant, Cora's diamonds, her furs, even the cab waiting outside, in my "everything"—"out of pure conscientiousness?"

"Oh, I'm not leaving 'everything,'" Cora imitatively replied. "There'll be the alimony, of course."

"Oh, there'll be the alimony, of course, will there?" I sneered.

Cora flushed ever so slightly, but with her perfect good humor she turned the tables on me with:

"Oh, I ain't goin' to 'do' poor old Ummy, don't you worry. I'm only goin' to take enough so's he won't feel uncomfortable about me."

"I beg your pardon," I apologized stiffly.

"Aw, drop that," she begged; then, "I wouldn't take even his dimons an' things—but if I don't Angelique will."

"It's simply because you think you're not good enough for Ummy that you're going?" I pursued.

"I sh'd think you could see fast enough why," she replied, a touch of impatience in her drawl. "First or

last there's bound to be trouble—and before long either—and I'm clearing out before the trouble comes."

"Why should there be any trouble? Callum won't make trouble and you never do," I was weak enough to argue.

"Ummy'll find me out," Cora serenely explained. "That's where the row'll begin. And if you and Angelique think I'm the kind that sits still and sees a row coming and don't get out of the way, why, you don't know your Aunt Mary," and Cora drank lingeringly her glass of *chablis moutonne*.

I waited.

"Angelique's a fool," Cora now asserted gently, and drank another glass of wine.

I said nothing. Cora applied herself placidly to salad. While she had the best will in the world to tell me anything I wanted to know she didn't want the trouble of stating her case unaided. She wanted me to fairly dig it out of her, and, as I wouldn't dig:

"I ain't an actress," she vouchsafed; "I ain't a young Trilby, and I'm scared, scared all the time that Callum'll find out that it's all a pack of lies. I ain't ever been what you'd call tough—but I ain't ever been what you'd call straight either—you know the crowd I chased around with—and he thinks, he thinks all the fool things about me Angelique told him, and a heap he's made up since."

"Well, what of that?" I said.

"What of it?" echoed Cora. "Callum thinks I'm about too good to live, that's what's of it. And I just can't sit by an' see how he feels when he finds out." She gave it out slowly, deliberately—her ultimatum.

We were both silent for a time.

"I'm most dead, too," she took up the tale, "though that don't make so much difference. I don't dare go anywhere with him for fear somebody'll say something to put him on. I don't dare go and have a good time when he's not 'round for fear he won't like it. An' if you think it's fun sittin' in my flat— You know me!

I like a good time, and Ummy—now he's got a home of his own—he never cares to wander."

And though she was as unemotional as a jelly, I divined in her wistful tone that she was homesick, homesick for the boarding-house, for the visiting back and forth in wrappers with the other girls, for the jokes and jollying, for the give-and-take of the "crowd," for her lazy "turn" with its applause; homesick to the heart for her own life from which she was so completely separated.

But all the same it didn't seem to me to be any reason for leaving Callum, neither her boredom nor her scruples, and I told her so, and she simply looked out of the window at the passing carriages as if she didn't hear me.

"Would you feel like getting out if you were sure there'd never be a row?" I asked.

"Oh, I'd stick it out, then, I suppose. I'd stick it out, but what's the use of talking like that? If the whole lot of us were all different from what we are, everything would be all right; it's just because we're us, that they're wrong," said Cora profoundly, putting her finger on what is wrong with the world.

"Cora, do you care for Callum?" I asked at last. She was gathering her things together. At this she looked at me oddly with narrowing eyes.

"I'm not the sentimental kind, I guess," she answered. "I know too much about men and 'love' and all the rest. I started in too young. But I'll tell you one thing. I care a heap sight too much for Ummy to let him go through what I know's comin' as plain as if I'd seen it and a heap sight too much for myself. There, you've got it."

She was on her feet now, putting on her things. Then she straightened up, and said, with the first emotion I had ever heard in her voice, "It's all along this fool marrying. I knew I didn't have any business to do it. I knew all along. But there, that's me! I always do anything anybody asks me if they ask hard enough. I always have, it's so much trouble not to."

Which was Cora's version of "*ça me coule si peu, et ça leur fait tant de plaisir*." "And," she continued sombrely, tranquilly, "the worst of it is, I always will. And there's sure sometime to be someone after me; there always is after a woman like me. I can't stay shut up like an houri forever. And if they keep at me long enough, Ummy'll be away and—oh, it's all foolishness. What'd he want to go an' marry me for?"

She put one glove half on, buttoned one button and let the rest go.

"You won't help me?" she asked, looking me straight in the eyes.

"I certainly will not," I said.

"Well, I'll find someone that will then," she answered evenly. She beckoned her cabman. "I love to keep cabs waiting for me," she smiled. "Good-bye." And I believe that keeping cabs waiting was, besides unlimited mushrooms and oysters, the greatest satisfaction that Callum's money brought his wife.

Now of course a man with a scrap of sense would have kept out of the whole thing, and but for a chance meeting with Callum on a car a week later, a sight of his broad, radiant face and his jubilant invitation to call, I might have. But after a time Cora's reasons seemed to me so fantastic and shadowy and Callum's happiness so substantial that I had a curiosity to see how things were adjusting themselves, and so this time what I got served me right.

As I was ushered into the parlor which, if it looked like the inside of an elaborate bonbon box, was eminently fitted as a background for Cora, I heard the angry voice of Angelique raised in shrill altercation, and had I followed my instinct, I would have run for it. But the colored maid, as trim and beruffled as if she were on the stage, had already announced me, and already Angelique had rushed through the silken portières and was upon me.

"Tell her she mustn't do it, tell her she's crazy!" she cried.

There was no need to ask what "it" meant. Cora was really going to stick to it.

Cora appeared at the next door, self-possessed enough. She greeted me and bade me be seated as she disposed herself in a deep-tufted, blue satin chair. She was dressed in an enrapturing negligée, which even I could see was a "creation." It suited her graceful, slouching beauty as I had never seen anything else. I noticed also she wore it with the indifference that she might a forty-nine cent wrapper.

"She couldn't believe until this minute that I meant to go," she gave out indifferently.

"But why, why, why?" shrieked Angelique, like an enraged monkey.

"She keeps saying, why?" Cora remarked, turning wearily to me. "I told her all the things I told you an' she keeps yellin' 'why' at me."

"Well, I feel inclined to say 'why' myself," I answered.

"He won't never find out," Angelique continued in her staccato fury. "And what if he did? what if he did? he'd forgive you fast enough."

At that Cora raised her head.

"Forgive me? I don't want him to forgive me. I ain't done anything to forgive, an' I know what life's like when a man 'forgives' the woman he's living with. I seen it," she concluded grimly.

"Oh, ain't you the fool? Ain't you the fool?" wailed Angelique, but it wasn't the wail of defeat; it was but a taking of breath before another storm, and I guessed that the fiery little creature had it in her to tire the patience of a dozen Coras.

"And if he didn't find out," Cora added, "ever, it's as bad as if he did, being afraid of it—and *afraid of it for him* all the time."

"She sits here moping; she won't go out and have any fun; she won't see none of her friends," Angelique moaned.

"No, I just sit here thinkin' how'm I goin' to get away without makin' any fuss," Cora explained with her detached air.

You wouldn't have dreamed by her voice that she had any interest in the subject in hand. She yawned; then

reached out for a box of sweets and selected one carefully.

Then what tempted me I don't know. I may have divined her real emotion under the habitual laziness of her exterior; it may have been her beauty which moved me, and I felt sorry for Callum who must lose it, but I couldn't play my role of bystander any longer, and I also remembered that Cora had told me she always did what people wanted her to.

"Look here," I said, "you haven't any right to clear out this way, without any regard for Callum's feelings, and I think what you said about not being good enough for him is all nonsense. You're straight as a die—you've been straight ever since you were married and that's, after all, what matters."

Cora stopped eating and looked at me fixedly.

"You mean to say if you waked up one day and found yourself married to me you wouldn't have a fit?" she asked.

"Not if I loved you," I answered sturdily. "It's that that counts. It's the only thing that really counts." And then once launched, my artistic temperament carried me away, and with what little wit and eloquence I had I pleaded poor Callum's cause. I certainly convinced myself; I tore up Cora's arguments so thoroughly that I wondered that I had ever paid any attention to them, and, indeed, her boredom seemed to me of little account; other women got over homesickness, and with plenty of money there wasn't any reason I could see why Cora shouldn't, and as for Callum "finding out," as she said, every month he didn't lessened the chances that he would.

Cora listened earnestly. She drank in my words as if she had been thirsting for them and every time I made a point Angelique rubbed it in, and every time Angelique spoke, Cora turned to her with an "Aw, shut up," unwontedly sharp.

And the enthusiasm of my special pleading carried more before it than my own common sense. I remember I ended with a plea to give herself time, to wait—not to act hastily, and as I

stopped Cora rose to her feet. She stood, lovely and distressed, before me.

"All right," she said, "I'll give it a try. I'll do my best. I'll do it for Ummy." Then she looked from Angelique to me and back again. "I hadn't ought to listen to you, but I can't help it!" she cried. We were all on our feet by this time in the excitement of the moment, and the buzz of the electric-bell made us jump.

"It's him," breathed Cora, while Angelique, nerves on edge, went to the door. It wasn't "him," nothing but the mail and with it a letter from Callum. Cora broke it open and read it while Angelique and I made perfunctory talk.

Then there came from Cora a little hurt "Oh"—nothing but a sigh, a breath. Then, "Oh, I can't bear it—I can't do it," she cried in her low, unemotional voice. "Here." She came over to me. "Here, take an' read; then you'll see what I mean."

I didn't want to read Callum's letter, but it wasn't the moment for grimaces, and I "took and read." It was a variation of his love song which I had heard on the night when he transfigured Cora in my eyes; all the faith and love and honesty of the man were in his homely phrases, and all his uncomplaining romance.

Meantime Angelique hopped around excitedly, crying, "Give it to me. Give it to me. What's he say?"

"Oh, you wouldn't understand," Cora replied with calm insolence, "and I can't make you—I haven't got a rush of words to the face like you. I don't know exactly what I do mean. But this letter fixes me. *He* understands." She nodded at me. "He can tell you, perhaps."

And indeed I understood then what Cora had felt all along, and what she couldn't, as she said, put in words. For again, as I read Callum's clumsy, tender letter, I heard him as on that other night and I saw that what was important was that he mustn't find out, that it was after all his ideal of Cora that mattered, and that he would find her out if he lived with her day by day was

inevitable. All men and all women find each other out, but in poor Cora's case there was really too great a drop. It wouldn't do, I understood in my moment of vision, that Callum should wake up some morning to find himself married to a handsome sloven, whose morals had been no better than they should be, and whose dearest and most uplifting pleasure was the eating of food. And as it was, romance need not die, and there would be a chance for abnegation on Callum's part and all sorts of noble virtues, which he would enjoy even while his grief at the loss of Cora hurt him. Indeed, it was only by her leaving him that the Cora whom he loved could remain with him always. If Cora went the nightingales could sing beautiful heart-breaking things to Callum as long as he wanted to listen.

"He won't be so very much surprised. You see what he says—that he can't believe it's true—that he doesn't belong in my class—and that some day I won't be able to stand him. "Well," she went on, "it isn't true, it's never been true. It's part Angelique's lies and part his romanticness—and we aren't in the same class, him and me."

"What you mean to do? What you goin' to write him?" demanded Angelique.

"He's not coming back for a month. I'll write him—something—something that won't hurt him too much, that I care for somebody else or something."

Angelique burst into a shrill laugh.

"Then he won't have to come back—I don't think he'll want to come back," Cora went on. "Callum, he don't belong here."

It would be pleasant to leave Cora on a pinnacle, to present her giving up her man for his sake, to leave her almost the woman that Callum believed her, but unfortunately what Angelique had to say had the truth, though only half the truth, with it. She had in her turn read Callum's letter and now went up to Cora, thrusting her ugly little face fairly into Cora's.

"No, I don't understand," she sneered, "why that letter made you so

blamed delicate all at once, but what I do understand is that you're bored to death being respectable!"

She turned from Cora to me and spread out her hands, palms out. "Bored to death!" she repeated.



## BALLADE OF EXPECTANCY

By Theodosia Garrison

WHAT time my anxious mates agree  
That old age is a thing to dread,  
I gaze upon them wonderingly,  
As scarce believing what is said.  
The crown of youth upon one's head  
Weighs heavy as a sinner's wage;  
The false-front were a joy instead—  
I'm looking forward to old age.

Consider what a peace 'twill be  
When pomps and pompadours are shed  
When comfort ousts our vanity,  
And days of dieting are dead;  
When, clad in good alpaca thread  
And Congress gaiters like a stage,  
We can sit loose and comforted—  
I'm looking forward to old age.

Then, only then, can one be free  
From those weird things that must be read;  
For me the Seaside Library,  
With Shaw and Nietzsche far and fled;  
No more to follow as one's led  
To prink and prance and strive and rage,  
But peaceful, easy and full fed—  
I'm looking forward to old age.

### L'ENVOI

Sisters, what though 'tis heresy,  
This the conclusion known as sage—  
The least resistance line for me—  
I'm looking forward to old age.



## THE READJUSTMENT

By Frederick Orin Bartlett

HE was the first to recover full consciousness. After rising painfully to his elbow, he stared about him. He saw a woman lying on the sand, her body slipping noiselessly backward and forward with the motion of the waves. After gazing at her, dull-eyed, for several moments, he decided to sleep. But an insect persisted in crawling over his face, and this so roused him that he concluded to pull the body up out of reach of the playful waves. This done, he staggered back to the shade of a tree and, falling from utter exhaustion, slept where he fell.

When he again awoke the stars were shining. He blinked stupidly at them a moment and then became conscious of a shivering voice, unintelligible. He turned his eyes in that direction and saw on the sand near him the woman. He felt for his flask to quench his thirst, and, not finding it, swore. The woman shuddered. Then he turned over on his side and slept again. The woman, too, slept.

When he awoke for the third time the sun was shining. He rose to his feet and blinked at things. His eyes fell upon a stretch of sand, upon the woman who had crawled away from him, upon a cluster of trees to the right, upon the expanse of blue sea. The sea!

Laboriously he lugged back into his brain the incidents of the last few days—the storm, the wild struggle for the boats, a white face expressing absolute despair as his hands closed about the throat—there were too many in the small craft—a period of night, and then this.

Moving his heavy hand over his forehead, he felt a keen dart of pain as his fingers came in contact with a half-healed cut. He studied his sticky fingers a moment and then traced the length of the wound. It extended from below his left eye, across his forehead, to the forelock.

The woman stirred, flickered back to life, struggled to her feet, fell, rose to her hands and knees. She was very slight, and her salted black hair fell all tangled about her head. Tearing back a lock which lay plastered over her eyes, she observed first the man, then the group of trees, then the sea, then the man again. Her arms gave way at the elbow, and she fell face down in the sand, weeping.

The man grinned. "That's right," he said huskily, through parched lips; "bawl!" Then he growled, "I'd sell my soul to hell for a drink!"

The woman made her feet and stumbled as far away as she could before dropping. He followed to her side and stood over her a moment. Finally he said, "Brace up, Nell."

She only buried her face deeper in the sand.

With considerable effort he was able to reach the group of trees, and there he found a spring. Plunging in his head, he drank, in deep gulps. He also found a shrub bearing some sort of fruit resembling the yam, and of this he ate a great quantity. Then he fell over on his side and slept again.

When he awoke this time the sun was setting. He felt refreshed. His brain worked more quickly, and he felt the return of elasticity to his limbs. He stretched himself, and there came

over him a delicious sense of physical strength. He drank again at the spring and ate of the fruit, crowding large pieces into his mouth, scarcely chewing them at all.

The woman had crawled nearer, and he now saw her lying in the sand, a loose, dark bundle. All about him was utter silence. And yet this silence seemed broken whenever his eyes rested on her, lying there motionless.

With sudden eagerness, he carried her up to the spring and threw water over her in splashes. Prying open her mouth, he poured it down her throat. When she came to herself he tossed some of the fruit in her lap, and she gulped it down, keeping her eyes fixed on him.

"What's yer name?" he asked.

"Nance Warren."

"Mine's Andersen—Bill Andersen. Guess we're in for it, Nance. Where'd you come from?"

"Boston."

He was a long time silent. Finally he burst out:

"This is a hell of a place!"

"Where—where are we?" she asked.

"Dunno."

"Can we get off—in the morning?"

Both were staring out into the darkness covering the sea.

"Do we git off at all? That's what I'd like t' know."

She gave a little start. "What do you mean?"

"Brace up!" he answered.

She dared not speak again. He rose to his feet and half fell.

"Gawd! My legs is weak."

He lurched in her direction, and she sprang like a frightened hare into the darkness.

Stupefied for the moment, he listened. "Nance!" he shouted.

There was no answer.

"Nance!"

He heard only the swish of the waves—flooding up, receding—as rhythmically as the breast of a sleeping woman.

He fell to the ground, mumbling to himself.

## II

HE did not see her for three days. In the meanwhile he explored the island, going as far back as the range of hills in the distance, from whose summit he made out the blue line of the ocean again. He found plenty of vegetation and saw a number of wild animals. At least there was no present danger of starving. Although he had followed the sea for twenty years, he had not the slightest idea as to where he now was.

After watching the unspecked sea for two days, the idea that he might be here for some time became enough of a conviction to induce him to build a light shelter. As he worked on lazily and the hut took form, he grew conscious of a certain loneliness. He wondered what had become of the woman, and if by any chance she had met with an accident. If so, he was left alone here. As, with this on his mind, he stared at the limitless blue plain always before him, he became depressed. There was something uncanny in the thought that as he moved about no one heard him; that the thump of his feet on the turf, the breaking of the twigs as he worked, the rhythmic sibilation of the waves rolling in below him, reached his ears and his alone. He became morose and surly.

Finally he made up his mind to hunt for the woman. For all he knew she might be waiting to kill him as he slept. He had not gone a hundred yards in the underbrush before he heard a voice. It frightened him. The woman warned: "Don't you come any nearer!"

He answered with honest joy, "Hello, Nance!"

"Stay where you are," she repeated.

He saw her leaning against a tree at the top of a knoll, a pointed stick in her hand.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I suppose we had best come to an understanding at once."

"What you mean?"

She stood very erect, the stick tightly clutched.

"In the first place," she went on coolly, "we must plan some means of escape from this place. Can you build a boat?"

"What for?"

"To—sail in," she replied weakly.

"Where to?" he asked.

"Where to? Why—we must be near some place."

"Aye, near hell," he growled. Her aloofness stung him. And his raw carelessness—his ready, quiescent acceptance of his lot filled her with fresh repulsion. She had been accustomed to men alert to fight adverse circumstances—men always on the aggressive against Fate.

"Are you going to do anything?"

"What's the use?" He paused, and then added lazily, "Only thing we can do is to wait and keep cool. An' while we're waitin' we might as well be sociable. What the hell is the use of fightin'?"

"Fight?" she burst out, half tears. "You're not man enough to fight! Why don't you do something? Why don't——?"

He laughed at her, conscious of his strength. "Buck up, Nance."

She bit her lips till the blood came.

"So you are to do nothing! Very well, we'll settle another point then. I have found a shelter for myself beyond here. I wish you to promise that you'll not under any circumstances approach it."

"Sure," he answered carelessly.

"If you step within that shelter, Andersen, I shall kill myself. Then you'll be all alone here—all alone."

She spoke without emotion, and this impressed him. He knew she would make her promise good.

"You're damned suspicious," he said.

She saw a danger. "No," she went on, "you'll keep your word. But it is just as well to have these things clearly understood."

He was growing angry, and she knew that in this there was a danger also, for he would then act impulsively.

She must not irritate him. Stepping confidently toward him, she said,

"I'm hungry. Have you anything to eat?"

### III

THAT night the woman slept little. She had rolled several large stones to the mouth of her cave, and behind these she crouched, the sharp stick by her side.

Up to this point in her life her training had been that of every woman of her class; her education had been supervised through college by her father; she had mingled with wisely selected friends; she had been successfully shielded from all that would mar the hoped-for result—an intelligent, evenly balanced negative. As the daughter of a brilliant lawyer, she had inherited a tendency to think, but this had been safely diverted into a harmless, if heretic, idealism. When she emerged from college she thought, and had a right to think, that her life from that point on would call only for an easy constancy to her well-grounded conventions.

Some of her friends called her a pretty girl; all of them called her a sensible girl. She herself did not know whether or not she was either. Not that she was anæmic. The trifling episodes of her life—dinners, dances, concerts, golf, even a few superficial love affairs—she had entered into heartily as they came along, and forgotten as they passed.

She had been provided with a safe outlet for expression of all vague, unknown emotions in her music. She played a violin with a good deal of feeling. She had been on her way to Germany to join an aunt with whom she was to pursue her musical studies, when diverted by a storm into this new sphere.

Up to this evening, her mind had been so fully occupied in following present events that she had found little time in which to brood. Now, after a rest and brief relaxation, her thoughts

turned to the immediate past. Instantly she lost her new-found strength, and wept.

At the snapping of a twig without, she threw herself upon the earth, covering her ears. When no longer able to endure the silence, she sprang to her feet. The dark itself frightened her as when she was a child.

A child! How long ago that seemed. And yet with startling clearness, for ordinarily these years were blurred, she recalled a hundred forgotten minor incidents of those days, and saw once again the sad, sweet face of her mother. In a frenzy of acute personal grief she threw herself upon her knees.

"Oh, mother! Sweet, dear mother, I am all alone! Come to me! I'm afraid here, dear Mada!" (It was the old pet name which sprang to her lips—the name she had not spoken since her mother died.) "Mada, Mada! Come to me, Mada!"

So she sobbed on until she slept, and then her mother came to her.

When she awoke, heavy-eyed, she thought for a moment that she was back in her home room. It was some seconds before the present returned, and then an awful feeling of prison-like restriction seized her, and she forced her body out through the cave mouth into the sunshine.

The sky was blue again—frankly blue as though fresh made. Behind her the trees swayed gently beneath the caresses of a warm breeze. The green sloped down to the dry, golden sand; the sand to the calm sea; the sea to the pitiless horizon line. The scene to her presented a horrible incongruity—like a babe cooing in the arms of a dead father which she had once read of.

And yet she felt faint for hunger. Nature ever crushes on with pitiless persistency. To the left she saw a thin column of smoke. At first this brought a sense of overwhelming joy—she was not alone; then, quickly following, nausea—she had best be alone. She pictured this man stooping over the flames; saw his rough, brutal features betraying raw, elemental passions.

Her thirst increased to the point of actual pain. It drove her to mount the hill. There she saw him sitting by the fire, holding something over the flames. He saw her as he glanced up, and beckoned her to approach.

She dragged her weary limbs to the spring, and after a drink continued down the hill to his side.

"Worked three hours to start this fire," he said with some pride.

"Have you seen anything—out there?" She waved her hands toward the sea.

"No," he growled. "Thought p'raps there might be some wreckage, but there ain't. The luck's agin us—ain't even a body."

"A body! God forbid!"

"Might get a knife or somethin' off'n it."

She drew away from him.

"Sit down," he said, with a suggestion of authority. "I caught this thing."

He held up a broiling carcass. "Looks like a rabbit," he said.

Tearing the cooked animal in two, he offered her the smaller portion, but she shrank back from it. He made no comment, but ate both pieces. In the process his face became smeared with grease.

"We gotter keep this fire goin'," he remarked. "When you ain't got nothin' particular to do, you might git some wood."

She flushed. "All right. The smoke might be seen. Couldn't we put up some sort of flag for a signal?"

"What's the use?"

She watched him as he lay there on the sand—a great, lazy animal. She had not known before that such men were.

"Have you no family, Andersen?" she asked in a fit of curiosity.

"Aye—a sister. The rest was drowned—mostly."

"But the sister?"

"She'd be happier drowned."

"But you have some place to go back to—some place you call home?"

"Dunno of any."

There was no emotion in the pitiful

phrase. He did not care. How much better was he than the rabbit he had just killed?

She felt a new sense of helplessness, and returned to her side of the island.

Here, as she sat on the rocks long days, gazing out at sea until well-nigh blinded, her home life returned to her in a series of vivid pictures. She gloated upon every little incident, bathed in the light of old smiles, enjoyed over again old pleasures, renewed old friendships. She realized now the sweet calm of the life which had been hers and saw how carefully it had been made for her.

"Oh, Mada," she prayed, "help me back to it again! Help me back!"

#### IV

ONE afternoon, six months later, she sat before her cave braiding her black hair—the picture of an Indian princess. In the bushes beyond she heard the rustle of moving leaves, and after peering keenly caught a glimpse of a form. She sprang to her feet, clutching at her pointed stick.

"Andersen," she called, "what are you doing there?"

There was a moment's silence, and then the man emerged, sheep-faced, and yet with a certain air of challenging bravado. He did not speak.

"Sit down where you are," she commanded. He obeyed. The fact brought her heart-beats back to normal.

"I was after a rabbit," he began.

"You are lying," she interrupted.

He looked up quickly. "What of it?" he asked.

"There is no use of it."

"You wouldn't believe if I told the truth." Then he added, "It gets damned lonesome down there."

"It would be still more so, Andersen, if you were all alone—all alone."

"You don't dare to kill yourself."

"Yes, I dare kill myself."

"Why don't you, then? I would if I dared."

"I wish to live. A boat will come some day."

"D'you think so—honest?"

"I know so."

"How?"

"I just know."

He hitched uneasily upon his rock.

"Can you tell dreams and spirits and things?"

She saw his fear, and, to take advantage of it, lied.

"Yes."

He crossed himself.

"That is—" she began. It was the first deliberate lie she had ever told. The truth—the absolute, clean, naked truth—had been at the basis of her training.

"I knewed a woman once who could do that," he asserted. "Devil Nell they called her. Can you make spirits?"

"Sometimes. I'll try tonight."

"Hell, what's the use?"

They sat there a moment in silence, and then he said, "Guess I'd better look after the fire."

As he slouched off, he glanced back over his shoulder twice, in fear.

She began to laugh, but checked herself. A thought had come to her as by a revelation; she had lied and was not sorry for it. Was she coming to her true self?

For a number of weeks now she had been conscious of a subtle change in the tendency of her thoughts. She brooded a great deal more about herself and less of home. The old life was becoming blurred. With so much unoccupied time on her hands, she had taken to many foreign musings and indulged in much self-analysis. This was the question which had now suggested itself to her: For the first time in her life was she coming to a more intimate knowledge of herself—of that vital, quivering self which distinguished her from all ever born or to be born—that self which dated past into the unknown centuries, which underlay all that this world had heaped upon it? She felt a lightness of head at the thought. All these years she had been acting a part chosen for her, but now, with the old bonds removed—what was this Self? She knew the same



terrified delight she would have felt had a stranger suddenly stepped from the woods.

"Nance Warren, Nance Warren," she repeated to herself. Even her name sounded new, fraught as it was with a fresh, vital significance. She rose to her feet slowly, stretching her arms over her head as though to test some new-found physical strength.

She reviewed her past life, trying to analyze it from this fresh viewpoint, amusing herself by wondering what different paths she would have chosen if unaided by anything but this personality of hers. Her cheeks burned as she recalled one man who had touched but lightly upon her life, and who until this moment she had recalled but as one of several. He had been deftly turned aside and had dropped from sight. But now he stepped forward before them all. Her real Self had called for him. It was a delicious thought. It went farther; why not love him now, and then when she returned—

She had thought all her bonds severed. Here was one, the strongest of them all. She was still shackled to the past—still a prisoner to the future.

She ate her evening meal with Andersen, for she realized now that she must not leave him so much alone. As they sat on a little into the evening she, in a new resolve to keep her old life fresh in her mind, told him something of her family and friends. He was not interested. They were nothing to him. Upon leaving she said:

"Tomorrow, Andersen, I wish you to help me put up some sort of flag on that tallest tree. Will you?"

"Sure."

"There is always a chance, you know."

"Why don't you use spirits?"

"Perhaps I will," she laughed.

It was the first time she had ever laughed in his presence. He watched her in surprise as she hurried off.

## V

THEY had lost all count of the time

since the wreck. She said eighteen months, he said twenty-five. She came upon him one morning as he sat before the fire with a live rabbit in his hands—a tender-eyed, quivering thing which, having exhausted itself in trying to escape, now lay passive in his arms. She knew what he was about to do, and turned away her head. When she looked again, thinking it all over, she saw him still sitting there stolidly watching it. He held it by its hind legs. The animal gave another frantic struggle and pawed its way weakly out to arm's length, where it lay down again, exhausted, its quivering nostrils buried in the turf. It seemed like nothing but a little fur-covered, palpitating heart. Andersen drew it towards him and picked up his sharp stick. For the life of her the woman was now unable to remove her eyes. Yet her breath came and went almost in time with the rabbit's. The animal rested its moist eyes on those of the man. The latter's were the gray of a steel blade.

In new-found terror the rabbit tried another direction, climbing a short way up the man's breast. It buried its head there. The man could feel its warm breath—its soft fur. His fingers loosened their grip from the hind legs, and the animal climbed up still farther, until it finally buried its head in the man's bosom. The latter stroked its back gently. Then with a sudden start the rabbit freed itself and darted off. The man watched it in silence as it hopped into the brake.

The woman sat down where she was, trembling. A great, inexplicable joy was hers.

Not long after this the same rabbit came nibbling about the camp, and with a bit of food Andersen tempted it near. After a few days of patient coaxing, the animal became so tame that it dared approach in shy hops and eat from his hand. In another week it dared lie in the man's arms. He used to play with it for hours at a time, and it would follow him long distances into the woods.

The woman came upon the two at

play one evening, and sat down beside them. The rabbit darted off.

Andersen laughed. "Bill doesn't know you," he explained. "He's afraid."

She felt a bit jealous and lonesome. The man had found a friend. And it seemed unjust that she, the tender, the merciful, should inspire fear in a beast which had approached fearlessly one who did the killing.

"Won't he come back?" she asked earnestly. "I'll not harm him."

"He doesn't know you," he repeated.

"Won't you try to call him back?"

He turned towards the brake where the rabbit sat, big-eyed.

"Come, Billy. Come, come!"

The rabbit pricked up his ears, but remained immovable.

"You see!" said Andersen with evident delight. "He won't come. He's queer—is Bill. At first he was afraid of me, but now sometimes when I wake up at night and feel lonesome I call for Bill, an' he'll come even if he's asleep. Bill has a brother or something over yonder, and I'm going to try to get acquainted with him."

He talked with the easy familiarity of a man speaking of his family. It made her feel even more alone. A lump rose to her throat.

"But he needn't be afraid of me," she quavered. "Won't he let me go to him?"

"Don't b'lieve so," he answered.

"I'm going to try."

She took a bit of fruit and approached the rabbit.

"Billy, Billy, Billy!" she cooed.

The animal did not move. She gained hope the nearer she approached. Her heart was beating hard from the excitement.

"Billy, Billy, Billy!"

She was almost within reach.

"Come, Billy, come!"

With a bound the rabbit darted from sight.

"There! You see!" exclaimed Andersen, who had followed every move. "He don't know you."

The woman rose, her lips trembling

It was all so manifestly unfair—so unjust that a rabbit should fear her. She felt intense pity for herself. If the little thing had only come to her she would have smoothed its fur and held it to her warm breast. But it feared her, and went off into the brush as though she had meant it harm.

"You see!" said Andersen, who seemed to like to repeat the phrase. "Bill's afraid of strangers."

"But—but I wouldn't have harmed him."

"Well, he didn't know. You can't blame Bill," he hastened to add, fearing she might misjudge. "He couldn't tell but what you was going to stick him."

"I!"

"Well, he didn't know. You can't blame Bill."

He stuck to his point stubbornly, as a man will who knows his mind but fears the subtleties of argument.

"But won't he learn? Won't he get used to me?"

"P'raps," he hazarded.

She had never in her life been more in earnest over anything.

"If I should bring him a bit of food each day and——"

"Bill doesn't eat much."

"But I may try, mayn't I?"

"Sure," answered the man, "but Bill's queer."

That night the woman tossed uneasily in her cave, dreaming of a rabbit who came almost within reach, but darted off each time as she was about to stroke his fur. She awoke several times with tears in her eyes.

## VI

THE whole interest of her life now centred in this one burning desire—to win the love and confidence of Billy. Early the next morning she said to Andersen: "Where is Billy?"

"Dunno. Generally Bill goes off in the morning—visitin', I reckon. I tried to find out once by following, but he didn't seem to like it, so I quit. He's queer, is Bill."

"Why do you suppose he's afraid of me, Andersen?"

"P'raps it's—it's spirits," he suggested solemnly.

"Spirits can't hurt animals."

"Then I dunno."

That evening she again tried to coax Bill to her, but he kept just out of reach, as in her dreams. Yet he came willingly enough to Andersen's arms.

He brought the trembling animal over to her once, murmuring soothing words to it.

"So, Billy, so! She won't hurt you."

When she put out her hand to stroke its fur, it buried its head in Andersen's breast. He smiled. She noticed the color of his eyes. They were gray.

"I wish he loved me so," she said.

"He's queer, is Bill," he repeated affectionately.

She put out her hand to touch the animal. As she did, her hand came in contact with Andersen's arm. In a flash the animal leaped free from nerveless fingers, and the two stood facing each other. She threw back her head a little and gazed unflinchingly, almost with a challenge, into the gray eyes. They fell before hers, and the man turned away to resume his old seat by the fire.

He stared over the blue waters. She studied him more critically than she had ever done before. His rough features and the deep lines cut by coarse dissipations were half hidden by a long flaxen beard. The clear eyes and heavy nose alone were visible. His forehead, arms and throat were tanned a deep brown. The hands were softened.

When she removed her eyes it was with a flickering smile of conscious power. Their conversation drifted into hackneyed lines.

"I saw a butterfly over yonder," he reported.

"I've seen several—one with purple wings."

"Aye."

Her glance strayed up the hill. On the tallest of the cluster of trees there the shreds of the signal-flag fluttered.

"Isn't much left of that," she remarked.

"No. The last storm tore it up. I s'pose we might make a new one."

"I suppose so," she yawned.

"I'll pull some grass for you some day to make it of."

"All right."

They were silent again. Their sleepy thoughts fell into still more sluggish channels. She wondered what had become of Billy.

Finally he rose. "Guess I'll go have a look at the nets."

He had arranged some fish-nets in a small cove on the other side of the island.

He slouched off and she sat on there, alone—half-vexed that he should leave her so. As soon as he was out of sight she looked about among the bushes for the rabbit. It was not to be seen, and so she wandered on. The more she hunted, the more anxious she became to find the animal. She had reasoned that Andersen himself, in some way, had prejudiced it against her. He may have used some sort of witchcraft.

It was not far from her own cave that she found it nibbling the tender grass. Tiptoeing near, she called soothingly, as a mother to her child:

"Billy, Billy, Billy!"

The animal pricked up his ears.

"Billy, Billy, dear Billy!"

Her voice broke. For a moment the rabbit seemed to be upon the point of approaching, but, changing its mind, it hopped off again. She followed. It retreated still farther.

"Oh, Billy," she pleaded, "please come. Please come, Billy. I'll not harm you."

Lowering its head it nibbled on unconcernedly. From where she stood she saw its heart pounding against its breast.

"Please come, Billy," she persisted, now on her hands and knees.

The rabbit hopped away, a dozen yards this time. She sank down upon the turf and wept. As she wept, angry with herself that she should do so, a new emotion caught fire and flared up like dried grass; she felt jealous hate

for the beast. Seizing a rock she hurled it with a physical strength she had not dreamed was hers. It flew true, and struck Billy on the head. He fell, and after a tremendous struggle, became a heap of lifeless fur.

Her own heart stopped its beating for a few seconds for the horror of what she had done—as much in the realization of the fierce, uncontrolled passion as for its result. Her hot face became as dry as though whipped by a desert wind. In quick reaction of feeling, she ran to the dead animal, bent over it, kissing where the rock had struck. She took the body into her lap and smoothed the fur, now so unresponsive. The fur felt dead, and she dropped the carcass.

Came a new fear—what if Andersen should see? She listened painfully. There was no other sound but the interminable swish of the pebbles on the beach.

She seized the body, and tearing her way through the bushes, leaping rocks in her path as lightly as the rabbit would have done a minute gone, forced her way to the sea and hurled the body far out.

Then she closed her eyes and groped her way back to the cave.

## VII

THE thought that burned was that she had done such a wrong to Andersen. He would awake some night, perhaps that very night, and, feeling lonesome, call for Billy. Oh, God, he would call for Billy, lying there alone in the dark! She might even hear him calling.

"No, I mustn't, I mustn't!" she sobbed. "Please, God, don't let me hear him call!"

Yet that night—late, when the sky and the sea and the stars have the world to themselves—she crept from her cave to the brow of the hill overlooking Andersen's hut. She thought it was her raging thirst which had dragged her there.

She heard a voice calling confidently in the dark:

"Billy, Billy! Ho, Billy, come!"

## VIII

THE next morning she sat down by the fire with him, shivering, though it was not cold. She had slept but little, she told him.

"I was kinder restless myself," he said. "Couldn't find Billy."

"Perhaps he's gone visiting," she suggested, the words burning her throat.

"Shouldn't wonder," he replied.

There was a long silence.

"I found some good grass over across. I guess some day I'll pull some."

"I'll help you."

They ate the fish he had cooked. Finally he said:

"I had a queer dream last night. I dreamed a ship came."

"Yes?"

A year ago this would have excited her to fever pitch; now it scarcely aroused interest. She knew. Day after day she had watched the unmarked blue, and waited. No ship would ever come. That much she had settled long ago.

"It was a merchantman," he went on dreamily.

"So?"

"I dreamt it came right up here. God, if one should come!"

"None will."

"There's a chance, ain't there?"

"I s'pose so."

"If one should!" he exclaimed again.

"Then we'd go back," she replied carelessly.

"Bet your folks wouldn't know you."

She was as brown as an Indian. Her chest and arms had filled out. She was nearly as strong of arm as he, and red blood tingled clear to her finger-tips. This phrase he had used did not move her. "Folks" meant no more to her now than to him—not so much, for his brain was used to these long absences and could span the lapses.

"No," she answered, because he seemed to expect an answer, "I don't believe they would. But I should know myself," she added quickly. Then she laughed. Her voice had coarsened somewhat, and her laughter was a trifle overloud, probably because of her association with him.

Turning toward the brakes, he called, "Billy, oh, Billy!"

She watched him.

"Oh, Billy!" he repeated.

"Funny," he muttered, contracting his brows. "Funny where that Bill is. I s'pose he's visitin', don't you?"

"I s'pose so."

"Guess I'll hunt a bit for him."

The remainder of the morning she wandered by herself over the island. She pitied this man from the bottom of her heart. It hurt her to think of his waiting patiently day after day for his friend to return. Yet she dared not put an end to it by telling him the truth. And what was the use? He would only hate her for what she had done. His eyes would grow cold and he would be surly. He might even refuse to allow her to share his food. Then she would be all alone. She looked forward to the noon-hour when he should return. It seemed a day before that time arrived.

"Couldn't find him," was what he first said.

"That's queer," she commented.

Her voice did not tremble, nor her hand shake.

"What if he doesn't come back at all?" she asked.

"Oh, he'll come back some time."

"But if he doesn't?"

"I know Bill better'n you," he answered jealously.

Their eyes turned towards the sea, as always they did when the conversation lagged. This sea! It had come to bear a peculiar relation to her; it was no longer a connecting link, no longer a prison wall; it was just a vast negative, as the sky was. She stared at it, conscious only of its blue.

"Here comes your ship," she said ironically, pointing towards a black speck a few rods off shore, moving in

with the tide. At her words he had turned quickly.

"It's only a bit of wood," he answered simply, after staring at it.

She laughed to herself at his matter-of-fact brain.

They both watched the speck listlessly, for their eyes held to this darker object in the unbroken blue.

Then of a sudden she felt the blood leave her face. She grew first cold, then hot. She dared not move.

The dark object floated nearer, flooded up by each wave, swept back and forth, but gaining a little each time.

Andersen leaped to his feet. There he stood, his eyes glued on the object. Then he ran to the sea and waded in to his knees. Picking up the dead body of Billy, he brought it to the dry sand and dropped it there. A moment he stared at it. Then he stirred it a bit with his foot.

Looking up to the woman, he said:

"Well, he's dead. Billy's dead."

## IX

THE incident of the rabbit, as one of vital interest in their lives, lasted but a few days. Andersen caught another bunny, and this one became tame to them both. They called him Billy, and he used to hop from the brake when either called.

The woman passed little of her time in the cave now, only retiring there at night to sleep. The remaining hours were spent with Andersen. He had thought up a new project—the construction of a large house for himself. She entered eagerly into the scheme, and helped to carry the timbers, and held them in place while he tied them with ropes of stout grass. The rest of the time she knitted industriously at large mats, which were to form the roof and sides. She sang as she worked.

He builded carefully, strongly, permanently. Neither of them realized the full force of this idea of permanency. It had found its way into their



brains as insidiously as a germ enters the body. They constructed a firm foundation, chose the best timbers, and wove their mats as closely as possible, all under the influence of this idea.

One morning she did not come to help him. He waited patiently until noon, and then ventured timidly to approach her cave. A hundred yards distant he stopped and called for her.

"Nance! Oh, Nance!"

He received no reply, and ventured nearer.

"Nance!" he shouted.

He heard a voice from within, a tremulous, uncertain voice.

"I'm hurt, Andersen."

"What?"

"I fell, Andersen. I cannot move."

He tore away the rocks at the entrance. At first he could not see, but finally he made her out lying full length in the corner. He moved no nearer.

"Wha—what's the matter?" he asked unsteadily.

"I cannot move," she answered.

"You will have to bring me food and water, Andersen."

Without waiting to hear more, he dashed out to the spring. He filled a bark pail and seized a handful of fruit.

She drank eagerly of the water and ate some of the fruit.

"Are you much hurt?" he asked.

"I don't think so; only it hurts to walk."

Never before had he seen her helpless. There she lay with all her grace emphasized—just a woman. She was as weak as a woman, as dependent as a woman, as beautiful as a woman. And back of all this she was Nance, his messmate and partner. She was helping him to build a house and—

Unconscious of it, he had been staring at her with kindling eyes.

"Andersen!"

She spoke sharply.

"Yes, Nance."

"I wish——"

He waited for her to finish. She

turned her burning face away from him with nothing to say.

He came nearer. "Let me take you out of here," he begged. "Let me take you down to the house. It's warm down there and——"

"Andersen!" she said again in the same voice she had used before.

He waited, as before, but she only shrunk closer to the wall.

"Let me carry you out! Let me carry you out!"

He placed his hand on her arm.

"I'll carry you so'st won't hurt," he ran on.

"Andersen!" she cried. "Leave me!"

Instead, he stooped and tried to lift her. With all her strength she fought against him—fought madly, insanely, like a savage. Suddenly he kissed her lips.

"Andersen!" she shrieked. Then, "Oh, you brute! You brute!"

He stumbled out.

## X

THE point was this: she had been conquered. She had fought her best, but in the end his lips had met hers. It made no difference that the act had been against her will; nothing could cancel the fact. He had now given her an alternative; either she must carry out her threat, or admit her submission. She lay in the cave living over again in apparently an interminable cycle every minute of the last hour. Her mind did not seem able to go back of that period, nor far beyond. It had come about so swiftly—so inevitably—that it formed almost a detached crisis, complete in itself.

After an interval her mind left this episode and went back to the day before, when she had sat in front of the half-finished house, helping and singing at her work; it went back to the time she had heard him calling in the dark for Billy; it went back to the days when she had sat a great deal alone in her cave. There it stopped.

It went forward to—the time when he should enter again. For either she

must go to him or he would come to her. There was no alternative except—and she shuddered.

She repeated automatically, "You must keep your promise. You must keep your promise."

She mumbled those words over and over again as a frightened oaf mutters stereotyped prayers.

Then in strode the full-blooded Present, shoving aside all her fears, shouting in a clear voice, "You are mine! There is no past; there is no future save of your own making. It is good to live. You are mine!" Then her cheeks burned with the knowledge that she hearkened with a certain joy.

She heard a voice without: "I've brought you food and water, Nance. I'll leave it at the door."

She shrank back closer to the wall. There she lay trembling, holding her breath. A minute passed.

"Speak, Nance!"

"Go!"

There was a long silence. He had gone again.

For a moment she breathed freely, but once again the problem pressed in upon her. She must do something. She could not wait—that would make her out weak and would be worse. Worse for him and worse for her. She must do something positive, something positive. This suggested only one thing. And yet life was still sweet to her; she had never felt more keenly the full joy of blue sky, clear water, green grass, of birds and flowers. Then there was that new-found joy—the joy of building. She had first known it as she sat weaving mats while Andersen tugged at heavy timbers beyond. She had felt a little trembling passion at the abstract thought that she was helping to build something. This had grown.

After a long search upon her hands and knees she found her sharp stick. She felt of the point, and it broke in her hand. The stick had decayed.

She uttered a big, gulping sob.

## XI

ANDERSEN had returned to his house

with a passion which found vent only in tremendous physical exertions. He felt a need for resistance—for the weight of solid things and the strain of muscles. He removed obstacles he had before been unable to stir. A large heap of stones lay piled up beside the house, and he carried these one by one down to the sea and hurled them in.

Of the woman he dared not think for a moment. The only way in which he could check himself was to continue this feverish work. He realized he could do nothing to prevent her from carrying out her threat. It was easy enough to take another life, but to preserve one—that was different.

He might shut her away from all weapons, as he had once thought of doing, but she would then starve herself. He might threaten her, but he would be without the only weapon that would make a threat worth anything—the fear of death. No, there was nothing to do—nothing, nothing. She was sole arbiter of her fate and of his, too. For he would not remain there alone. He had determined that. And he wanted to live—to fulfil some of the dreams he had dared dream while building this house. And it had been those very dreams which had worked the damage.

He might not even approach her cave to see if it had already been done. He must wait. A day would pass two days, three days, and if during that time the food were untouched, the water not drunk, he would know. There would be no noise about it. Once he had known a man was about to be shot near him. There was this interminable wait, but at last had come the sharp crack of rifles and the tension was snapped. He remembered that he had laughed the next second and taken a drink.

So he toiled on until night came, not stopping even for food. Twice he had gone for water, but each time he had imagined groans as he stooped over the spring. After that he endured his thirst.

The skies had clouded over, and as

the sun left him a moaning drizzle descended. It beat in upon the empty house where he sat. The house as it then appeared, might have been half decayed instead of half builded. He sat with his head crushed between his hands. Every raindrop striking the house made a little noise, and at each noise he felt a pang.

Suddenly he heard, in the darkness to the left, the cracking of twigs and a movement among the leaves. Then he saw a shadow detach itself from the fringe of trees and move toward the

house. Twice it ceased to move and twice it came on again.

After what had seemed to her a day, the woman had almost reached the house. Every step she took caused a cutting pain. She steadied herself at the sill, tremulously leaning against the door.

"I guess," she faltered, "I guess you'll have to help me, Andersen."

Dumbly he held out his calloused, large-knuckled hand, and she placed her own within it.

## THE FIRE IMMORTAL

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

WHEN Dawn, with misty fingers, comes tapping at the pane,  
And Sleep, the sluggard, lingers no more in eye or brain;  
When deep in cold Earth's centre new-quicken'd pulses sing  
And through the snow-gates enter the heralds of the Spring;  
Then pack the knapsack lightly, and take the staff in hand,  
And tread the trail that cannot fail to lead to Noman's Land!

The snowdrops are a-quiver where yet the snow is seen,  
And, by the singing river, the leaves give hint of green:  
Soon—and with word like pardon from Winter's frozen lair,  
Magnolia fills the garden with odors white and rare;  
Soon—and with glad returning, the golden Springtime haze,  
Bearing the old Spring-yearning, the orchards all ablaze.

Now is the time to follow far over hill and wold  
After the steps of Apollo into the Land of Gold;  
The purple hills are calling on the far horizon's rim,  
The morning-star, slow-falling, would bid you follow him.  
Open your heart to laughter, open your soul to fire;  
Look up and follow after into the realm Desire!

Tear hopes from thongs that bind them, fare with the clean clear dawn,  
Seek them and you shall find them: nereid, dryad and faun.  
The nymphs are still in the hollow, the wood-gods wait on the lee,  
It needs but the faith to follow, it needs but the eyes to see;  
And, if the heart be willing, even the modern man  
Can hear, through the valley thrilling, the wonderful pipes of Pan.

Then up with the dawn and follow, far on the saffron track,  
Your hope over height and hollow, reckless of turning back.  
Go forth, for the ways have parted, and tread, with the staff in hand,  
Light-footed and light-hearted, the way to Noman's Land!

## A LOVE LETTER

By Norval Richardson

SHE stood by the open window, letting the warm, gentle breeze blow about her, caressing and encouraging in its hint of Spring. A slight flush came into her cheeks, and for a moment an expression almost like hope shone in her soft brown eyes. This bright look brought back a hint of her marvelous beauty which for the past few years had been steadily fading, and anyone seeing her at this moment could easily realize that this woman of thirty-five, now faded and painfully fragile-looking yet still retaining all the marks of great beauty, had at one time held that strange power over men which the possession of great beauty gives.

The high, white forehead, the delicately molded nose, the soft, sweet lips, the charming contour of her face—all were there still, yet each seemed touched by a withering finger—a flower in full bloom blighted by a too early frost. Only the large, expressive eyes, burned on with an inward fire contradicting all other signs.

She turned from the window reluctantly, and called her maid.

"Mathilde, I think I shall drive this afternoon. It seems warm enough now. I don't think it can possibly hurt me. Will you order the victoria at once, and bring my long fur coat? Tell Robson not to be slow—I may change my mind if he is not here in a few minutes."

She sat down listlessly, as if the few words had exhausted her.

The maid returned in a few moments carrying a long coat and furs.

"Robson will be around at once, madam. May I help you into your

coat now? You must wrap up very snug, for it will be colder when you return. Do you wish me to go with you?"

She shook her head in reply.

"No, I shall go by myself. I want to be alone. Call me when the carriage is at the door."

She leaned back in her chair, and pulled the heavy coat about her. The light from the grate fire and the sunlight through the window rushed to meet each other, and yet the woman, between the two, shivered.

Mathilde entered the room again.

"Mr. Keene is downstairs, madam. He wishes to come up and see you at once. It is important, he says."

"Of course; bring him here."

A half-surprised, questioning look was on her face, as she waited, and when a young man—tall, slender and very pale—entered the room, she rose quickly to meet him. The resemblance between the two was marked; anyone could see that they were brother and sister.

"Henry, what is it? Something has happened!"

She held his hand tightly in hers while he met her look with evident self-control. He turned slowly away from her, and walked towards the window. She followed him, still holding his hand.

"I hate to tell you, Margaret. Do you feel strong this afternoon? Don't you think you had better calm yourself first? Sit down here by the fire while I close the window." She followed his suggestion, and in a moment he had drawn up a chair beside her, and took hold of her hands. This time her eyes met his quite placidly; it was he who was the nervous one now.

"Well, what is it?" Her voice was low and even.

"Your husband——"

"Is he injured in some way?"

The young man was silent, his head bowed.

"Is he dead?"

"Yes, Margaret."

She turned her face toward the fire, and remained silent a long time. Her features were quite without expression.

"Tell me about it," she said after a long pause. "I want to hear everything. Don't spare me any of the details."

The man rose and walked down the room. When his back was to her he began talking.

"I don't know any of the details yet. You know he was on the flyer from Chicago. The four sleepers were crushed in a collision. Only three people escaped. He was not among them."

"Then you are not entirely sure?" she interrupted, breathlessly.

"Yes, I am. I telegraphed for him to be identified. They have done so. That is all I know, Margaret."

The young man sat on the arm of her chair, gently slipping his arm about her. Her face was still dead white and emotionless.

An hour slipped by without a word passing between them.

"I must leave you for a while, Margaret. I shall return in a short time. Would you like me to send for Aunt Ellen? You must not be entirely alone."

"No, don't send for anyone. I couldn't bear to talk. Tell them all not to disturb me, Henry. I want to be absolutely undisturbed. You understand, don't you?" She laid her hand affectionately on his shoulder, as he bent over and kissed her.

"I'll be back soon. Any time you wish me, I'll be in the library."

When he had gone, she rose quickly and locked the door after him; turning to another, she locked it also, so that she might be protected from intrusion. Then she stood in the centre of the

room a long time, as if dazed into a stupor. Suddenly realizing that she still wore her long coat and furs, she took them off impatiently and threw them across a chair. Again she stood thoughtful, her hands clasped behind her. The minutes raced by; the bright afternoon light faded into a deep gold; a tinge of gray came; then purple and a penetrating blue; the lights in the street began to glitter; a street organ stopped in front of the house and began to play laboriously.

As if unconscious of her movements, she went to the window, raised it, and leaned far out. The music became louder and more insistent. It was a Strauss waltz, with all its melody and rhythm and languor.

The warmth had gone out of the air now, and she reached for her coat and pulled it about her, still leaning out of the window until the organ had moved on, and everything was still once more.

A knock sounded on the door.

"It is I, Mathilde, with your dinner, madam."

"I do not wish anything. Please do not disturb me any more."

Again the room became silent.

In moving from the window, she stopped abruptly before the cheval glass and looked at herself a long time. Closer, and then at a distance she surveyed her reflection.

Suddenly she uttered an abrupt cry and rushed into the adjoining boudoir.

When she returned she had taken off the dull-colored gown, and wore instead a long, graceful robe of rose-colored chiffon. It was draped from her shoulders in long, flowing lines, and rippled into a thousand tiny ruffles at her feet. With a graceful deftness she piled her hair high on her head, and thrust a bow of rose-colored chiffon in it. Then she looked at her reflection again.

The listless expression was entirely gone, and in its place was a gorgeous flush which seemed to fill out and beautify what before had been emaciation. Her head was held high; her lips curved into a joyful smile; her wonderful eyes



shone with the inward fire which was now illuminating her whole body.

The clock had chimed nine before she moved away from the mirror. With the recollections that the slight noise brought to her, she turned to a small table and pushed it directly in front of the mirror. Taking some writing-paper and a pen from her desk, she carried them to the table. Then she seated herself and turned on a convenient electric lamp.

Again the reflection caught her attention, and she gazed at herself as if in intercourse with another person. The clock reminded her as before, and she took up the pen with an expression which seemed to thrill her whole being.

"DEAR RICHARD—DICK:

"Think of my using that name after ten years of silence! But it has only been an outward silence, for in my heart it has been ringing all the time, year after year, day by day—it has been your name always. I wondered sometimes if you knew it, and then I could not understand how you could keep from knowing it. Didn't you feel it beneath my cold smile of greeting, and the formal 'Mr. Sherman' that was on my lips? Did you never guess my secret, Dick? Frankly, did you never have any suspicion? Perhaps you will exclaim at what I am now saying, but you must have heard that the barriers are down at last—at least for me. I can speak to you once for all now, and it must make up for the ten years of silence—the silence of a lifetime for me. There is no harm in my telling you everything now, for I can't live much longer. The end is in sight. I can see it as I look at myself in the mirror. You saw it a few weeks ago when we passed in the Park. I saw the pained expression on your face when you looked at me and realized it for the first time, but you did not know that the cold smile I returned to you was only a self-protection—a violent self-control that kept me from rushing to you, if only for a moment, and telling you that my love for you was my life . . ."

She stopped a moment, and brushed

the hair back from her forehead; then she took up the pen again, and it flew across the paper, covering page after page in rapid succession.

"I was twenty-five when you spoke to me of your love. How every detail of that evening stands out before me! I remember the music, the fragrance of the roses; even the odor of your cigarette is as pungent to me now as if it were all happening over again, and the ten years of my misery had not taken place. You told me of your early marriage, of how you had outgrown the woman you thought you loved, how she was of no assistance to you; how you needed a woman of imagination and intuition to help you live your life in completeness. You told it in a very straightforward manner, and honorably, too, for you did not blame her, only yourself. And when you told me that your mistake had become a tragedy when you met me, I at first thought you meant to insult me. How you argued with me! How well you argued, and how I loved you! It is a queer thing—this conscience we have, which keeps us from following the dictates of our hearts! While you talked to me, your hand was on the back of the bench near my head, and once when I turned my face toward you, my lips were very near to it, and I almost kissed it. That was when I was laughing at you and telling you what a joke it would be for me to run away with you. Men never know how much more the women hurt themselves when they try to hurt the men they love. . . .

"You never knew that I married to save myself and you from dishonor. I could not have resisted your arguments—no, not your arguments, but yourself—much longer. I saw it would be necessary for me to put some barrier between, one that I would consider if you would not, and I knew that I must do it quickly. So I married. . . .

"Do you remember how the papers spoke of the young woman who had everything that life could offer? Everything seemed to smile upon her, even Nature had brought a beautiful day to witness her marriage. Everything was

perfect. How little the world knew, and yet how it thinks it knows everything! . . . I often wonder if there is any suffering greater than that of a woman going deliberately into a loveless marriage. Beyond the ignominy and self-mortification is the loss of one's pride and self-respect. Then, at a time when all that is human and natural in a woman should be uppermost, when the cry of her whole being should be to assert its mission, to have her nature rise up in revolt at the horror of it all! That is what a woman never recovers from; that is what has wrecked my life. I now see that it would have been less dishonorable to have lived with you as your mistress than to live with my husband as his lawful wife. . . . Dick, do you know that my love for you has made all this degradation possible? It was this same love for you which made me see your life dishonored if you deserted your wife. At that time I did not see the shame of my own life in marrying without love, for even in my twenty-fifth year I was strangely ignorant of all it meant.

"Sometimes, when my husband put his arms about me, the only thing that kept me from taking my life was a supreme effort in which I forced myself to believe that it was you. With his lips on mine, his hot breath in my face, I would keep my eyes closed tight, and repeat without cessation that it was you, you, you. You know, now, the depths to which I have descended. . .

"If I had had children—God has spared me that shame—they should have looked like you. They should have been yours, though not physically, at least with all the mental power that a woman can exert over her unborn child. And yet, you have children. Do they look like you? Have they any resemblance to the woman whom their father loved? I half imagine not; yet I hope there is some little trait that is like me, in them. . . .

"Ah! Dick, the long, long years of hopeless waiting, with only an occasional sight of you, the hand-clasp of formal greeting, the cold, civil smile of

greeting. Still, these little incidents were beautiful oases to me in the great desert of my existence. It seemed that I was waiting and waiting, and again, there seemed to be nothing that I was waiting for. One day after another dragged by and I kept on living, without hope, and again with it, for it seems that while there is life in our bodies, we continue to hope, even when we know there is no such thing. . . .

"A year ago, the physicians told me that I must go to another climate to prolong my life. I laughed at them. Then they said it was absolutely necessary, not knowing why I laughed. Little did they know that it made no difference to me how soon the end came. I have read of the dreamless, peaceful Nirvana, but it will not mean that to me. It will mean only an impatient waiting for you to join me there—for you will come. I know it. I feel certain of it. It is not possible in the law of nature that when a creature loves as I do, that happiness will not come to her somewhere. We are taught to believe that we are the children of God, and that He loves us. That thought has comforted me. I know that it is not possible that He should have sent me this suffering without some cause, perhaps to make the happiness of our united love greater in the hereafter. Do you believe that, Dick? Do so, for my sake. . . .

"I must have made it very plain to you now, dear. I have opened my heart; it is laid bare before you. When you have finished this letter, you will know what the past ten years have been to me, and, oh! how I long to know what they have been to you. Come to me, dear, come quickly. And yet, I forget. You cannot come now. You must wait. Again convention; are we to be ever in its chains? . . .

"During my last conversation with the physicians, they told me a year more in this climate would bring the end. That I do not mind, only, must I spend that last year still starving? After the ordeal of the next few days, I am going away—I don't know where yet—possibly to Switzerland—any-

where to get entirely away from these dreadfully familiar surroundings. Will you go with me?

"Of course, I know that your duty is to your wife and children. But is there not a still higher duty—a duty to the woman you love? For you must love me still, don't you, dear? It will be for only a short time. I promise not to go anywhere or into any climate that will prolong my life. Rather will I go where the end will be hastened.

"Afterwards you can go back to them, and they will never know. Will you go, Dick? I do not see how I can live until your answer comes. Telegraph me when you receive this letter.

"Don't consider the consequence for this time. Only follow the dictates of your heart; let it lead you freely for this one time. Only think of me, and the joy of my last days to be by your side; to have your hand to steady me; to have your arms about me when the twilight comes; to feel the warmth of your breath on my cheek when the fearful chills overpower me with their dread cold.

"Ah! Dick, you can't refuse me; you can't, you can't! . . . The dawn is creeping through the windows. I have sat here and talked to you all night. I have felt your presence beside me all the time. You must have known that I was with you. Now, come to me, dear. The time is very short. You must hasten. Come, come, come!"

She dropped the pen after addressing the envelope, and leaned far back in her chair. The flush was still in her cheeks, and the first shaft of sunlight broke luminously over her rose-colored gown. For a moment she seemed bathed in a halo of glory.

Mathilde knocked at the door.

She rose, startled back into reality, and hastening to the door, unlocked it.

"It is your coffee, madam. But, madam, you are beautiful!" the maid exclaimed, in wonderment.

She turned to the mirror. "Am I, Mathilde? You really think so?"

A radiant smile added to the freshness of her face.

"I have never seen you look like that before," the maid repeated, enthusiastically.

"Take this letter, Mathilde. Put a special-delivery stamp upon it. I want it to go at once. Will you attend to it yourself?"

"Certainly, madam. Give it to me."

Again she was alone. In the warm sunlight of the early morning she stood a long time, her hands clasped before her, her eyes brilliant, her lips still curved in the smile of great joy.

An hour later her brother rushed into the room.

"Margaret, where are you? Margaret!"

She turned slowly. Already she felt her heart freezing.

"It's all a mistake. I've just had a telegram from John, and he was not injured in the least. What a terrible night you must have spent!"

She stood very still for a second, and then walked slowly to the large divan near the fire.

"Tell Mathilde to come here, please." Her voice was very calm and low.

The maid was already at the door.

"Did you post the letter I gave you?"

"Yes, madam, over an hour ago."

Then she gradually leaned forward on the divan and buried her face in the pillow.

"Thank God, he knows!" she murmured over and over again. "He knows at last!"

## SHOULD CRANBERRIES BE STRAINED

By Kate Masterson

IN looking through a magazine claiming to be devoted to the cause of true womanhood and the home, this forceful and simple heading presents itself. It is a truth that in recent years we have become used to finding anything and nothing in our magazines, from the newest crochet stitch to a portrait of our smartest prize-fighter or the Venus de Milo in unshrinkable flannels.

No one can fail to notice that, with the exception of the advertising columns, there is a certain vacuity and a reaching after the indirect and the ambiguous in the making of titles for fiction, essays and verse which are nowadays named to stun rather than to interest; or else there is a seeking for the misty distance effect which, in verse as well as in painting, is frequently mistaken for true poetic feeling.

There is no literary sin like simplicity in the estimation of our latter-day essayists and novel-mongers. So marked has been the vogue of the other sort of thing that the question, "Should cranberries be strained?" stands out cameo-like against a background of dense metaphors and titles symbolic of something the author intended, perhaps, but has failed to convey. The words, homely in themselves as a hearthstone and as easily understood, are positively refreshing in their absence of pose, their freedom from pretentious style or the bane of smart writing that one finds nowadays even in soap advertisements.

The mind wakes with a shock from maunderings about white souls, fluttering stars and shy, purple mosses to

the beauties of a direct thought, clear as a bell, imperative almost as a demand. There is no need to read further. One instinctively feels that the lines that follow are also simple; also direct. Here no author is gambling in rhetorical fields, kicking up his heels among the star-eyed cowslips and calling our attention to his silk stockings, his knowledge of ancient history, word architecture and the firing of epigrammatic hand grenades.

Our minds, grown fluffy with over-ornate phrasing, floats for a moment in a sea of perfect understanding of the Thought. The nebulous light that floods the brain like an X-ray, warm and comforting, starts a train of mental pictures without in the least answering the problem conveyed. There is the color and the form of the simple fruit associated in almost every mind with the joys of childhood's favorite holidays. We are swept back into the years, to the time when we thought seriously of such things as foods; when puddings were among life's pleasures, and recollections blossom like a magician's roses in the trodden-down fields of our memory.

And then comes the consciousness that out of all the thousands of thoughts that have thronged us ever since we began to think and since we have ceased to think, engulfed in the meaningless magazine era, with its distorted half-tone nothings and war-whoops reëchoed over deserted battlefields—we have never thought just this one thought!

The surprising thing, then, is not its directness or its kitchen-sprung suddenness, but its absolute originality.

It is a veritable New Thought in a world of old thoughts, and it calls for a reply.

First we realize that this subject is one that we have not only failed to consider, but that we have accepted blindly, unknowingly, ignorantly. We know, in fact, nothing whatever about it. We have always taken our cranberries as we do the morning sunshine, the bird's song, the frost-writing on the pane—without cavil or question.

The berries have come to us as a jelly, and, absorbing it, we have not for an instant considered the various processes by which this jelly has come to pass, from frozen bogs and dreary marshlands to our gold-rimmed plates.

But should they be strained? The very nature of their ruby, melting beauty would seem to indicate that they always are strained. We have never eaten, knowingly, an unstrained cranberry. But we don't know. We couldn't swear to it.

And, again, this has nothing to do with the real significance of the entrancing query. Were they strained or not strained has no special bearing on this matter; but should they be? Evidently there is some point of culinary morality involved. Is it right? That same old question that has rung in our ears for ages, and always when some forbidden fruit hung low on a branch and we stood tip-toeing at the turn into some primrose way. The same question that perplexed Eve's mind when she buried her untried teeth in the apple.

It is not—we read between the lines—what we wish, prefer, desire, fancy, as a child wants the moon, in accordance with our perhaps degenerate way of choosing or of rejecting; but what is in harmony with the immutable, universal law. Not what is—but what should be!

Reading it again and again, and yet again, feeling deeper each time the dignity, the simplicity, yes, the poetry, as well as the discipline of the idea, we think that it might well serve as a desk maxim in place of the tiresome, misleading saws that we post up where

our eyes may follow them and impel our brains to do it today, when in nine cases out of ten we do the wrong thing and would profit by waiting a day or sometimes a lifetime without doing it.

The other question is simple, and therefore it is subtle. It bids us pause and think. Should they? Who can say? The poet nibbling his empty pen and looking at a star; the statesman juggling with the nation's destinies, and frequently with its funds; the priest instructing poor humanity in the magnificent selfishness of saving its own soul? The young—the old? None! It is the question of the Sphinx—a recession in four words. It stops us in our mad haste and reminds us of the vortex of our abysmal ignorance.

It is easy for the glib and graceful writer to lead us in paths of oft-trodden familiarity. Since the world began we have been fed on high-sounding untruths, so garlanded with phrases that the falseness of the theme and its threadbare tawdriness have escaped us. There is not one thought that holds us from start to finish. The writer is struggling with some idea that he is trying to express; he is suffering from some brain-cramp, and, realizing in a distorted way his infirmity, he calls his efforts "Coffee and Cigarettes," and we fairly gibber as we wade through it.

Our literature is villainously over-trimmed. It glitters with scaly spangles; it clashes with ropes of imitation pearls; it is soggy with mental passementerie, and we grope through its tangled fringe and flounces like a woman looking for her pocket.

We know that there is no such thing as mystery—only that we simply do not know, and in our magazines the effort seems to be to prevent us from knowing or even suspecting. Writers gamble with their ideas as though they were dice and shake them out on the table—win or lose.

Yet the greatest American success in literature was scored by the writer who proved the simple rule that the concentration of a reader's interest upon a question is the hypnotic charm that carries us along like children after the



piper. It was not that the lady or the tiger really mattered or that either one was not equally terrible as an alternative—it was the doubt—the puzzle that touched certain lobes in the brain and held us in a thrall of fancy.

Should they be strained? Read it again, and you will feel the sensation of one peering into a Japanese crystal—seemingly of glass yet ready to yield to the eye miles of fertile distances, scenes, faces, loves—until the paths of the crystal maze are restful in comparison.

Maeterlinck, in his remote, wonderful grasp of realities, has made us know that what does not seem is more important than the outside of things. But we keep on admiring gilded bricks and hand-painted bronzes. The modern poet chooses the Temple of the Ages to twang his banjo in because he is not confident in his own age. He wants a setting, a background, and he modestly chooses the dim forest, the vaulted canopy or some other of the time-worn props that have been doing duty for years.

We are all choosing to live on the top floor without regard to the presence or lack of elevators. Under the roof of a sky-scraper, if we manage to hold the perch long enough, we may come to be mistaken for the stars. We affect to despise the earth, knowing in our souls that we are afraid of it. The sparrow on the curbstone is quite as sublime as the moonlight; but the moon has

been getting press notices for ages—there is no question about it, and the fact that it is a rather loud bit of nature is all the better.

The woman's magazine has at times been derided for its sordid tendencies; but women are always arriving somehow at satisfactory conclusions without quite intending it. The suffragists produced the athletic girl while they sought for the ballot, and so they may yet set the pace in literature and produce phrases that refuse to be passed by, fairly enchanting us, not so much by what they say as by all they leave unsaid.

Of course the unusual is now the fashion, and the iceman talks in epigrams through the dumb-waiter. We are all Sarah Janes waiting open-mouthed for the next instalment of Lord Algy, and the afternoon tea-table is rolled into every fashionable stori-ette with a fidelity which our area-door intelligence admires.

But there are admirable depths to seek as well as mean heights to scale, and dirges of great beauty sound through the wedding-march of the Happy Ending. In real life we know that all climaxes are beginnings and that life as we live it lacks literary construction. It is as episodic as a vaudeville show. But for the new, the direct, the simple and the fascinating, where in the deserts and jungles of the modern magazine can we find anything to equal this? Should cranberries be strained? Should they?

## AN OPTIMIST

By Samuel Minturn Peck

“I CANNOT answer yes,” quoth she,  
As I knelt down to sue;  
“One heart is not enough, you see,  
For all who come to woo.”

“Alas,” I cried, “my fate is rough!”  
Then flashed a thought profound:  
“Still—though you have not hearts enough—  
I’ve arms to go around!”

## THE STEPS

By Mrs. Henry Dudeney

**J**UNE! And never a merrier morning nor lovers more handsome. They stood in the valley at the foot of the hill along whose top ran the highroad. The girl's heart was beating; at any minute the coach might come—how she hated those accursed horses that were to bear out of vision her beloved! She was a being all fierceness and color—the mountains in her blood.

There was a track, like twisted ribbon, up the steep hill. It was faint and wavering; it jutted here and there, made the weak beginnings of a flight of steps. The lovers ascended; they went laggingly, with oddly restless hearts. The girl's was aching in an unbearable way, in a manner that nearly drew a cry.

She was beautiful, in a blooming, rose-red way. You thought of flowers when you looked at her; pansies of the darkest for her eyes, roses for her cheeks, and her throat was a sulphur-tinted lily. A garden of a girl! She bore about her a double air of fragrance and good breeding. These peasant women are often twice refined—by a life in the sweet, clean air, by more than a dash of high lineage. Our aristocracy is of the earth. There was about her, added to youth, to beauty and a subtle air of princes, that pensive air of tragedy which some women display. These are those born to romance, to exquisite intensities; they turn to suffering and beauty every common happening. They march to the strain of an epic.

The man was thinner, poorer, struck the false note. He was from a city, the biggest and falsest of all—London.

He was what we call a gentleman, and he was handsome, possessing those good physical qualities which highly civilized life engenders, expects, applauds. Pick his foolish face to pieces and lay it on a dish and you wouldn't find a fault with any feature. Yet to him, tame as he was by training and nature, it had been given to do one violent thing. Mary Mant was a mountain pool; he had ruffled it, and it lashed itself into a storm.

It had amused him to make elegant love to this peasant, and there had been an additional devilry to the affair by reason of her patient admirer, Enos Frost, the quarryman. Fancy being a quarryman on such a day—or at any time! A quarryman; a patient, yellow-faced drudge to split up slate.

This morning the world was more than common beautiful—or one's eyes were clear. The mountains appeared to be painted, the air was filled with the constant gurgle of giddy torrents as they tumbled over the slippery green boulders. And then Mary Mant was such a perfect thing; so young, so fresh, so untainted by ball-rooms. She was like a little tiger cub, adorably soft, yet with tempestuous possibilities. She was part of the landscape and made one perpetual feast of color. He couldn't, looking at her, be quite sure where one tint ended and the other began; she was all sober russet and daring orange. He had noticed, during his two months' sojourn in the mountains, that these primitive folk had a trick of striking in their clothing the true note of the landscape.

They were on the highroad. The coach appeared in the distance. He

saw Mary falter, saw her eyes give out an uncomfortable wildness. He hoped she wasn't the sort of girl to follow a man, beg her way to him—matrimony at the point of a knife was not in his programme. Yet such things had been. The coach was a long time coming.

"Good-bye," he said—and really felt sorry now that the moment stood so near; he felt something that might have been remorse.

"You'll come back again?"

"Yes, yes, that will be all right."

He watched the whirling coach; he could catch the clatter of it now and so could she.

"I'll keep watch," she said solemnly, her thick, scarlet lips a quivering fruit.

She looked like a vivid, hill-top fairy. He thought how wild these women in the lonely places grew—as he mounted the coach, as he waved his hand, as he watched her. He watched until the motley, gaudy figure became vague, dropped back, was merged into the maternal embrace of the mountains. Then he could turn his mind to other and more important things.

Yet it took him some time to forget—quite. Never had he seen a woman look more unhappy, more appealing; she had taken it very much to heart, the dear, wild fool. And it had been nothing, after all; a rain of compliments, well turned, now and then a stolen meeting, sometimes a light, brief kiss.

She would forget. She would marry Enos Frost, the quarryman. A lucky fellow!

## II

THE steps in the hillside were faintly cut out by the daily passage of feet. There is an eloquence, a mystery most touching about these impromptu flights of steps that one encounters out in the open world—particularly if they lead upward from a valley or downward to the sea: there is undying magnetism for mankind in mountains and waves. These steps lay mutely beneath the full eye of heaven, and had

no kin with a common stair made with hands.

As years went on, people called them Mary Mant's Steps. The years! They were many. They made decades—probably before Mary died they would reach to a full chaplet, be the true number for a rosary. Mary Mant's Steps! In this manner little spots of earth are baptized—for fantasy. And the new generation forgets why.

Mary had grown, like the flowers and fruit with which she was kin, more regal in her colors as time went on. Children were frightened of the figure she made—flying, violent rags, a mumbling tongue, a menacing eye. She might be seen any day along the road waiting for the coach to pass.

Every day, for thirty years, she had ascended the steps. The steps! She knew them so well, loved them. They were her true soul, her inmost life. Year in, year out—through screaming Winters and piping Springs—she had marked minute changes in them. And being a poet—unconscious, as most true poets must be—she had flung down on them all the brief glory of her young romance.

She waited for the coach; a figure eager, stricken, girdled by expectant Love. Sometimes she stood still, her meek hands folded. They were stained to the color of pale mahogany; all these years the weather had taken its own way with her. And she was alone in the world—everybody dead but Enos. She lived by the charity of scornful strangers, she picked up sticks for her fire where she might find them. Very often, waiting for the coach, she would trail behind her a real treasure—a big, dry branch she had found. She trailed it with candid joy—as a child does his pigmy, gaily-colored cart.

No woman before had surely ever shown the depth of color that burned in Mary Mant's rags and in her weather-beaten skin. Her bodice fell open, hinting at wreck. Her hair was one rough, furious mane, bleached by the sun, by wind, by every rain that lashed the

ribs of the mountains. It was tucked over one shoulder, twisted twice, with mad impatience and trammelled by neither pin nor string. The utter heartbreak of her was there for eyes to see.

She was a figure for laughter or tears—but, mostly, the people laughed. And the coachman, not born when her story lived, but knowing it by tradition, would pull in his horses and call out cheerfully that there was no one for her today. She used to lift her hand to her torn bodice and give out a sound like a hare. That was all.

Often enough the people on the coach, all holiday makers and generous, threw coppers or silver. To such a common, chuckling pass had her young passion come! She was a creature to be laughed at, derided, indulged. In the next guide-book they would put her in as a local feature of interest; the mountain district had become fashionable in thirty years. She would help to fill the pockets of people who kept hotels and livery-stables. Already, the cynical sometimes wondered if she were really genuine, or merely an artful figure devised to fit the romantic scenery.

Directly the coach was out of sight she would repair to the quarry, for a bitter look at Enos, for a fierce gibe at him. And all this had been going on, without one quiver of change, for more than thirty years.

It healed her to hurt Enos. She was sane enough for that: sane enough to wield her bitter feminine power.

He sat all day, and every day save Sundays, splitting slates. It was skilled work, a nice touch; in a numb, blind way, it was craftsmanship. He sat in the big workshop on the top of the mountain—an open shed; they called it the mill. He sat silent, splitting slates and handing them over to a fellow-worker who trimmed them, with horrible rapidity, at a ghastly, whirling wheel. The shed was full of men who did mechanical things, always the same things; for them there was none of the intoxicating impromptu of pastoral toil. And, in the laborer's

way, they had become the color of their labor—they were dusty, they were dry, they were angular; everything that the slate was. It was strange that a mountain so instinct with passion could bear cold slate, could catch men for such a cruel occupation.

Enos sat splitting slate and Mary came stumbling up the mountain-side in her accustomed tantrum. The quarrymen, those down below who worked in the earth, roared with laughter. They always did. Tragedy, to common folk, only begins with a coffin-lid—the point when true tragedy is all covered in and the new bright violet light is breaking.

Mary went into the mill and was sobered by the jangle, din and moan of machinery. Enos, peering through the gray dust which forever hung between him and the pulsing world, saw her. Something, not born of slate quarries leaped to his gray eyes, lived coldly there for a moment. Then he went on splitting; one must not waste time, nor must one take the initiative with Mary—she would approach him when she chose.

She stood smiling before a wicked saw which was cutting through a block of slate all the time and making a yapping noise like a dog. She put out her ripely-tinted, lean hand. Enos rose in a hurry and twitched her arm and pulled her away. "He be a devil," she said, pointing merrily to the teeth of the saw. "Come an' stand in the sun, Enos, ef you ain't afeard o' daylight."

He followed her. The other men watched them, looked at one another and winked and knew, without knowing how, that Mary's vivid rags and wild face had warmed the mill; had stayed toil and made of them all throbbing men for a moment or so. And then they started splitting and trimming again and the gray dust rose and danced in companies.

Masses of Autumn bracken lay in the flanks of the mountain like rust.

"He niver come terday," said Mary, looking forlorn.

"I'd give over watchin', dear heart."  
"I wun't!" She struck her foot passionately against the slate chips.  
"I gied 'un my word."

"Like enough he's dead, Mary."

"Dead! An' on'y twenty-five. Now you be a graybeard"—she surveyed his lean, mean ugliness—"you be but a pore thing; but him an' me is young—a well-favored pair."

Her eyes were flashing, her body twitched. Her laugh was harsh—like January gales in a pine wood.

"Theer, theer, bide quiet, love," said Enos, patiently.

He took her down the mountain-side; he might do this, it was dinner-time. He watched her go along the winding road—a road of deep green and mountain gray, with here and there the piebald tints of a torrent. Something broke from him—it was a rolling curse against the man who had sent her crazy. It would not be good for that man if he came to the mountains ever again and met Enos Frost, the quiet quarryman.

The coach came gaily along in the full-bodied sunshine, and Mary was waiting. She watched with the mingled air of dove and eagle. It was a lovely September day; the peaks of the mountains were wreathed in mist—gauze to a girl's bare shoulders. The sky was blue, without one single murmur; gorse, heather and bracken in every gilded tinge made a glut of color.

Mary, as she came up the steps, had come springing, had come young, had come sure—certain sure. He would return this morning, her true love. Something had told her—perhaps that little staid sparrow swaying in the long trail of a sinful purple bramble.

The coach was top-heavy—with laughing women in Summer frocks, with attentive men, who pointed out the scenery with that painstaking exactitude which murders beauty.

Mary stood full in the road; she spread her arms—the sun looked in and out and laughed through all her savage rags and flutters.

The coachman pulled his horses in—

with a grin, with a wink, with a backward, bantering glance at the passengers. He had told them just what to expect at this turn of the road.

"Theer's nobuddy fer you this mornin', Mary Mant, an' that's a wonder now, ain't it?" he said, chuckling and flicking at fairy-fast flies with his whip.

The women at the top of the coach—all sane and settled in their loves, or in the lack of them—looked down with thin, scornful amusement at this mad Mary, the passion in her poor eyes—and not one of them with sight to see it!

She never heeded them; she looked up and gave a shrill scream. It startled even those pensive mountains who knew her so well. It made the people on the coach jump and cry out.

"Theer *be*, theer *be*!" she said, her starved heart springing on the joyful note, an exquisite smile rounding her old voice. "Do'ee step down, love."

She was pointing to a young man; she struggled to reach him. She ran round and round the coach.

"By Jove!" he breathed, with an uncomfortable laugh and knowing that he was being made to look a fool, "the poor thing's crazy. Drive on, coachman."

"I don't wonder at her being crazy." The pretty girl at his side clung to him and shivered and stared at the mountains. "This must be a dreadful place in Winter."

"Step down wi' you and leave them fools!" cried Mary furiously and running, running round the coach, dodging the horses' spread nostrils, the coachman's sprightly whip. "My dear, you ain't changed a bit. 'Tis the same face an' voice."

She flung up her arms. They were burned with weather, sinewy with age and wasting. Her torn and gaudy sleeves revealed them.

"Coachman, drive on!" said the young man in a positive passion. He was being made a fool of—with his new-made bride at his side. It was not to be borne.

And the coachman drove—with dust and dying voices and laughter growing



pallid and the sharp, quick ring of hoofs. And Mary stood stricken. The man she had seen was her false love's son.

She went blundering down her steps; she looked about her—lost and in terror. This place was strange. Everything was strange, and she more than anything. Love had gone palsied. She suspected that she was suddenly old, she ran her finger about her puckered lips and felt among the caverns of her eyes and cheeks.

"Ef I could happen on a pool I'd know for sure," she said, in a scared way, and went stumbling to find one.

All day she wandered—lost. Brightness died, the mountains dropped their gauze scarfs; they appeared bare—a terrific nudity. The sun, in blood-red rifts, made ready to die. His agony lighted up the cup-like pool Mary found at last. She fell on her knees and bent low and propped her lean face in her claw-like hands. The mountains were not more desolate than she; betrayed no more wreck. Both she and they had been so young in the morning, but this was night—big, naked, aggressive.

Enos, coming stolidly down from work, caring nothing, seeing nothing of mountains and sunset, thinking merely, as it were, of slate and *in* slate—found his poor love and dropped beside her on the short turf. To see Enos with crazy Mary was like seeing a widower with his new-born son. There was something clumsy and exquisite about him.

"Enos! I'm a-tryin' ter see myself, an' theer's nowt in the pool but an old 'ooman."

"Niver you mind, Mary. Come along down the mountain where the houses be, an' all's snug."

"I wants ter see," she said obstinately. "I'm minded, Enos, ter thrust me through the pool an' find my own purty face beyant this old 'un."

"Mary, what's come to 'ee?"

She stared at him. Her eyes trembled; so did her full, crinkled lips.

"He wur on the coach, Enos, terday. He ain't changed a bit, no more ain't I."

As for Enos, his head whirled, just as the machinery did up there in the mill.

"Who wur on the coach?"

"He wur," Mary nodded. Had she been a younger woman one might have said she dimpled; being old and something infinitely worse than merely old, it was horrible to mark her. "An' he niver knowed me. You must goo arter 'un, Enos. Tain't much ter ask."

"Ef I was ter go," said Enos, in a voice that growled, "I'd slit his throat; I'd let out all his false words."

"On the coach-top, Enos, as gay as gay. 'Tis gospel truth."

This was a moment for baring, for telling the positive truth—yes, even if she dropped dead at his feet, or if she went mad outright and seized him deeply by the throat, in those long savage hands of hers that were the color of a ripening plum. This must be, at last, the day of disclosure. It was a dying day—dying; the sky, in scattered patches was a deep, deep blue.

Mary looked up at these tender patches; Mary looked up at them and parted her wondering lips. Nature remained always magic to her.

"I'd like ter dig my finger in—deep," she said.

But Enos could see only the companies of sulky cloud—all slate-colored. Yet it was a wonderful night—a sacred, rare moment; even his ugly toil had left him enough imagination to feel that. He was going to tell Mary the truth tonight—yes, if it killed her, or him, or both together.

He peered at her; he could not see plainly. In a very little while he would not be able to see at all; he would only be able mutely to touch his poor love's wind-tossed flesh. The dying light, all brevity and violence, turned her crimsons to purples, struck the dark notes of her rags to impenetrable blackness. She looked larger, more dusky, more savage than in the day-time.

And they were kneeling together on the sweet, damp turf here in the heart of the mountains, he and the woman he had worshiped and fretted for over thirty years. In all those years, through all his praiseworthy splitting of terrible slate slabs, the want of her, the denial of her had been a dull knife

in his patient bosom; its edged turned away, yet remaining a knife.

"Mary"—he pulled her to him, not gently at all, but savagely, with possession—"Give heed ter ivery word I ses."

"I be a-listenin'," she nodded at him; she appeared more rigid.

"'Tis more'n thirty year since thet man went away. Thirty year hev you bin watchin' an' me a-waitin'. You be old an' crazed, my dear. Thet much he's done fer you."

His voice was solemn; as the voices of men who pray, from their very hearts, before a mingled company—leading the devious devotions of neighbor men.

Mary met his eyes; she had to push her wild face forward very close, because the sun was well-nigh dead by now and the mountain peaks had broken their poor hearts. She met his staring glance, all tender agony—and yet with a glint of undying hatred for the enemy who had done this. There ensued one of those brief, deep silences which strike the listening world. Enos, watching, saw the truth pierce her. It went like a nail in at the temple. She understood. The sweet, tragic illusion was lifting—but would it leave her clear-witted, unruffled, a fit mate for a sane man?

For he knew that they must marry. What else was left to do? In no other way could he take care of her; and yet he rather quailed at the prospect, for all the joy of it. Joy, dread, denial and approaching harvest were between them, making his head light. He half feared that he, too, might become a fool, a castaway. Mary was so wild, so dissolute with Nature. She had been swept through and through by the besom of the immutable mountains. She had no part with slate, with prim, regular toil.

His pulses stirred; in rapt, evasive moments, he felt once more a young man. This was his moment at last; here in the sweet night, on the bare, sleeping mountain. And yet how sad it all was—how bereft, belated! This he felt—yet knowing not the words to

think in. He had no wrapping of decorous language; could only dumbly, desperately feel.

Mary was smiling, she was sane; she, although he could no longer clearly see her, appeared paler. The drunken color, he felt sure, was drawn not only from her skin but from her sun-kissed rags.

"I be yourn," she said, with a long sigh, and leaned at him and let him put his fierce arm tight about her—and feel how pitifully gaunt she was beneath her tawny tints of crimson.

He drew her up, held her close, tuned her foot to his own steady tread. In this fashion, the night come, they descended. They went as young lovers; it was grotesque. As for Enos, he whirled and spun. He had taken on the seeming of machinery. Mary was won. He had lifted her, as it were, across the breast of that scoundrel. God's just curse be with him tonight, living or dead!

He would marry Mary. There was nothing else—nothing. He hoped the neighbors would not laugh.

He would marry her—and yet in his heart he knew he never would; he knew, too, that it would give him more rest, more of abiding bliss, to see her quiet in her coffin, the dear, daft thing.

She was stricken. She was white and sharp and waxen; he could feel sure of that, although he could no longer see her. She would die; life had no use for her. Thinking of her, in terms of machinery, in the only way he *could* think, Enos knew that no new metal parts could ever be fitted to this disordered Mary of his. She was completely worn out. She would die. Perhaps in the new morning she would be lying dead. For this reason, because it was such a sweet, passing quality, he cherished her voice as she said peacefully at intervals all down the mountain:

"I'm yourn, Enos—yourn; on'y yourn!"

She would die. For him? Well, there was the mill and the constant, quiet splitting of slate.

## CHOPIN AT MAJORCA

THE RAIN

By Jeanette I. Helm

A GRAY sky and a leaden sea  
That meet like Grief and Pain,  
And dripping palms that silently  
Weep underneath the rain.

Far on the beach the ocean surge  
Beats out its measure strong,  
And mingles with its solemn dirge  
The sobbing South wind's song.

Sick of all sounds, I vainly call  
On Love turned to Disdain;  
Upon my heart-strings, heavy fall  
The fingers of the rain.

In vain I dream of scenes more fair,  
Of harmonies that roll;  
The measure of a world's Despair  
Has struck into my soul.

Ah, Love, were it but yesterday  
And skies were glad again!—  
But now upon my heart alway  
Must beat the throbbing rain!



## SECOND CROP

MRS. HENPECK—Look, dear, I've bought you a lovely bottle of hair-restorer.

HENPECK—Umph! So you want the fun of pulling it all out over again!



“WHAT did you discuss at your literary club this afternoon, dearest?” asked her husband in the evening.

“The ‘Age of Pericles’ and—of Mrs. Brown.”

## L'ENTREVUE

Par François De Nion

**D**EVANT l'auberge, sur la route, une auto allongeait son éclatamment fin de bête rapide, et Fernand, au moment où son chauffeur serrait les freins, admira du fond de sa limousine plus lourde, la forme d'élégance et de vitesse de la voiture arrêtée. Des hommes s'empressaient autour d'elle pour réparer un pneu gâté par les accrocs de la route; d'une fenêtre, une dame chamarrée de fourrures jusqu'aux oreilles, et son masque sur le nez, donnait des ordres.

Le voyageur se pencha, demandant d'une voix brève:

— Le château de Cour-sur-Seules? Chez Mme. la comtesse Valoy?

— Tout droit, monsieur, en suivant les fils du télégraphe.

— Merci.

Il allait donner l'ordre de continuer, mais la dame l'appelait:

— Monsieur, Monsieur! Vous allez à Cour? Voulez-vous me rendre un service?

— Je suis à votre disposition, madame.

— Voulez-vous dire à la comtesse Valoy que je suis arrêtée ici par un pneu crevé, que j'arriverai en retard et qu'elle ne s'inquiète pas.—Ah! j'oubliais de vous dire mon nom: la baronne de Foncroix.

Fernand était descendu de sa limousine:

— Si madame la baronne veut me permettre de lui offrir une place dans ma voiture?—

— Mon Dieu, monsieur, ce serait tout à fait indiscret.

— Pas du tout, madame, et je serais heureux de rendre un si léger service

à une amie de Mme la comtesse Valoy. Vous serez tout de suite au château.

— J'avoue que la perspective de passer la soirée ici... Enfin, monsieur, votre offre est trop obligeante... certainement, j'accepte... Vous allez à Cour?

— Directement, madame, la comtesse m'attend; je l'ai prévenue par téléphone de mon arrivée.

— Vous êtes de ses amis, monsieur? Monsieur...?

— Fernand Hertzmondt; oui, madame, je suis un de ses plus respectueux serviteurs.

— Eh bien, monsieur, je suis très reconnaissante de votre amabilité.

Elle se tourna vers les hommes occupés à panser la voiture, distribua des instructions, caressa d'un dernier regard la machine vaillante, blessée d'un obscur caillou, et monta dans la limousine qui partit aussitôt.

Alors seulement, elle regarda son compagnon, étonnée un peu de n'avoir jamais entendu le nom de cet ami prononcé par la comtesse. Mme. de Foncroix d'un œil furtif put détailler le profil fin, la moustache blonde, l'œil rêveur et bleu de son protecteur.—"Il est bien, pensait-elle, mais je ne saurais trop comment le classer. Hertzmondt, a-t-il dit, et il a un accent allemand ou hollandais assez prononcé. Germaine a dû faire sa connaissance à son dernier voyage à La Haye."

Justement, Hertzmondt disait:

—Je n'ai l'honneur de connaître Mme Valoy que depuis quelques mois; c'est une personne bien charmante et bien distinguée.

—Oh, j'aime beaucoup Germaine!—

Vous êtes sans doute étranger, monsieur?

—Ma famille est de Norvège. Mais j'ai beaucoup voyagé.

—Comme c'est intéressant, n'est-ce pas, cette vie où tout est constamment nouveau, les paysages, les personnes...

—Oui, j'ai fréquenté des personnages intéressants; cette année le roi Edouard, traversant Inverness, où je me trouvais, m'a fait demander... Oh, je l'avais connu prince de Galles.

—Vous avez causé avec lui?

—Une heure.

—Il est fort agréable, n'est-ce pas? Très élégant?

—Il s'habille bien; mais se chausse mal... je lui ai dit.

—Vous lui avez dit...?

—Dans son intérêt. Il souffrait des pieds, c'était une pitié! Je n'ai jamais vu qu'un homme négligent à ce point de vue: c'est le grand-duc d'Anhalt.

—Vous le connaissez aussi?

—Comme le kronprinz d'Allemagne, Ferdinand de Bulgarie, Abdul Bey Mustapha, le petit-neveu du sultan, et combien d'autres encore; ah oui, j'en connais des têtes couronnées!

Il éclata de rire:

—De la tête aux pieds, si je puis dire.

—C'est dommage, pensa Mme de Foncroix, il est gentil, mais bien commun. Pourtant, comme il ajoutait:

—C'est tout naturel avec mes fonctions.

Elle comprit qu'il était diplomate:

—Un diplomate de maintenant, s'expliquait-elle, c'est partout la même chose.

Et pour parler, car la conversation commençait à l'embarrasser:

—Avez-vous d'aussi illustres amitiés dans le monde des arts?

—J'ai été en relations avec presque tous les grands chanteurs et les grandes cantatrices modernes; c'est étonnant comme la voix à de rapports avec...

Il s'interrompit pour s'écrier:

—Pauvre Tamagno, dix jours avant sa mort, il m'envoyait un télégramme: Il ne pouvait se passer de moi. Et Calvé, l'admirable artiste, et Melba et Lina...

—Lina? Qui?

—Cavalieri, madame.

—Et Patti? Connaissez-vous La Patti?

La figure de Fernand se modifia et ses traits se durcirent comme sous une poussée de colère; il se contint cependant:

—Non, madame, je ne fais pas concurrence à M. de Caederstroem; il ne faut pas confondre...

Mme de Foncroix se taisait, inquiète quelque temps, heureuse bientôt de voir briller au loin des lumières du château. L'auto roulait à travers le parc, cornant des appels rauques, et bientôt dans une cour lumineuse, stoppait au milieu du concours empressé des domestiques.

—Il me reste à vous remercier, monsieur, murmura Mme de Foncroix; je sais qu'on joue la comédie ce soir, et je ne veux pas déranger Mme Valoy. Je monte chez moi tout de suite. Mais nous reverrons, je pense?

—Madame, soyez certaine que je serai demain à vos pieds.

Mme de Foncroix évoluait dans la claire matinée de sa jolie chambre, prise au cou et aux bras par un doux peignoir blanc; elle allait et venait, songeant à son aventure de la veille, à son singulier compagnon de route. Et la jolie veuve monologuait:

—Je suis sûre que Germaine, en invitant ce monsieur, dont elle ne m'avait jamais parlé, a pensé à quelque chose pour moi.—Pourquoi pas, après tout? Il faut bien finir par se remarier quand on a mon âge. Il n'est pas mal, on peut s'arranger, il a de belles relations, il connaît tout le monde. Le nom, je sais bien, Mme Hertzmondt; mais les titres de baron sont faits pour ces noms-là... et puis avec un étranger, ce n'est jamais une mésalliance... Il n'est pas si mal, avec ses yeux bleus et sa moustache blonde. Germaine l'aurait fait exprès, qu'elle n'aurait pas mieux préparé notre entrevue...

Elle poussa un cri et se souleva sur sa bergère. Fernand Hertzmondt venait d'entrer; il s'avança avec un salut rapide et s'agenouilla devant elle.

—Monsieur, criait Mme de Foncroix,



votre conduite est incroyable! Je ne vous ai pas donné le droit d'agir ainsi; relevez-vous, ou je sonne!

—Mais, madame la baronne, disait-il en tirant de sa poche un bijou d'étui, qu'il ouvrait, plein de ciseaux et de limes, madame, je n'ai pas l'intention de vous manquer de respect. La comtesse m'a assuré que vous aviez besoin de mes services; vous le lui avez dit

vous-même hier. C'est l'affaire d'une seconde pour vous débarrasser de cet œil de perdrix; ne craignez rien, j'ai mes diplômes.

—Vous pouvez me confier votre pied en toute assurance.

—Hélas, songeait la baronne, en s'é-touffant, pour ne pas rire, de la batiste d'un mouchoir, et moi qui voulais lui donner ma main!



## TAMED AT THE TABLE

By John O'Keefe

A T breakfast in our little flat  
Our words ran hot and high.  
The canteloupe was green, and that  
Was shadowed in her eye.  
The bitter butter touched her tongue,  
Which leaped decorum's bounds.  
If I cold looks in answer flung,  
The coffee gave me grounds.

At luncheon it was worse by far.  
The white wine, sharp and sour,  
Produced much verbal vinegâr  
In that unhappy hour.  
The ragout put us in a stew,  
And, as a thing of course,  
When I the duckling cut in two  
I pondered on divorce.

But dinner! Ah! the most serene  
Peacemakers are the cooks.  
The vapor from the turtle green  
Steamed out our hardened looks;  
Succeeding dishes added spice;  
Stomachic bliss we felt;  
And when our hands clasped o'er the ice,  
You should have seen it melt!

Ah! love may languish in the morn  
When muffins make him moan;  
At 2 p. m. hurt hearts may scorn  
The finest luncheon known;  
But when the red-robed candles gloat  
O'er wine more red to see,  
Then Cupid dons a dinner-coat,  
And waits on you and me.

## MISTAKEN PREMISES

By Robert Adger Bowen

THERE was no sign of the chauffeur, but the girl sat with both hands on the sides of the tonneau, ready to spring if the queer noises the engine was making should seem to warrant it. She was turning her face nervously from side to side. Central Park just then seemed deserted.

Dare crossed the road, hat in hand, and I paused under the shadow of a tree. I could not hear what he said, nor if it was any more eloquent than the expression I caught in his eyes. Her own words, however, rang clear and relieved, and very Southern.

"Oh! can you help me, do you think? I don't believe Gustave really knows anything about the miserable thing, and he became so awfully abusive in French when I made him get down and go under the wheels that I gladly let him go in search of a shop, somewhere. It does such fearful things when you least expect it. Look there," she cried excitedly, pointing to a broken sapling and crushed sward, "just now it backed up there all by itself, and frightened a poor horse dreadfully."

He had never once taken his eyes from her face, but it was not time for a lavish self-indulgence, and he denied himself bravely.

"I know something about 'em," he assured her. "Have I your permission to examine the gear?"

She gave it with unflattering haste. "You had better not get behind it," she cried. "It won't go ahead, but the Lord only knows what it'll do the other way."

Throwing off his coat, and revealing himself in his shirt and trousers, Dare

found the tools he wanted, and went down under the machine.

I stood closer under the shadow of the tree and watched developments. All I could see of Dare was the Swastika-like expression of his legs, and a glimpse of blue shirt. The stroke of steel upon steel, and the sullen complainings of the motor were the only sounds. Now and then a carriage or a more fortunate automobile sped by, indifferent. The girl, leaning far over the sides of the car, was an interested observer. Presently the engine began to chug-chug ominously.

"Oh, do come out!" she cried, opening the door of the tonneau. "It can do such dreadful things. Just listen to that!"

I heard Dare reassure her, and little by little the fierce throbbings of the motor grew more controlled. The girl sat down.

Dare emerged. His trousers were covered with dust, fore and aft, his shirt was rumpled, there was a streak of graphite over one eye, and his hands were a sight.

"Oh, how mussed up you are!" the girl exclaimed. "Is there anything about this affair that you can rub it off with?" She was offering him the veil from her hat in one hand and her toy handkerchief in the other.

"It's all right," Dare told her gallantly, "and *she's* all right now, too. Your Frenchman can't know much. It was very simple—dead easy."

"Simple!" She laughed. It was a very care-free laugh and seemed to have a peculiarly fascinating effect upon Dare, for he stood looking upon her

without remembering to put on his coat and unconscious that he had put on an expression of eloquent imbecility. "Now, if Gustave would only come while she is all right!"

"You should not wait for him. Is it far to go?"

She let her eyes rest on his, frankly incredulous.

"Not wait! Do you think I could drive this thing to Tarrytown? I don't know the meaning of a single handle about it except its tooter."

"Why couldn't I?" he said, and hesitated.

"Is there danger of its getting wild again?"

"It is not in the best of condition," he answered with gravity, "and you really never can tell what the pesky things may do. Sometimes they are more mischievous when standing still than when under way. I've seen 'em kick up like bronchos, and hurl one out as though they were catapults."

"Mercy!" she cried. "I can believe it. If it stuck again, and you were not at hand—" She squared about abruptly. There was no sign of the returning chauffeur. After a moment's study of his face, she seemed to decide some point in her mind.

"You see," she explained, "my aunt doesn't know where I am. She came to town by train, and I thought I'd come in this way and join her, but we didn't join, thanks to this." She swept her hand over the little car.

"Your aunt," Dare repeated, I am sure not with forethought of explanation, though he drew it.

"Yes; Mrs. Armitage Strange."

"Oh!" he cried, jubilantly, and I thought at the moment how everything he wanted always came to Sydney Dare, "I know Mrs. Strange."

"Do you?" Again she looked at him with a frankness that would surely have brought a retraction had he been lying. "Isn't that nice? Maybe we might pin a paper to that tree"—she pointed to my cedar—"telling Gustave I had gone on and to follow by train."

I saw Dare's eyes gleam.

"Better than that," he cried. "I

have a friend about here, under that very tree, indeed, who will gladly wait and give the message. Won't you, Tony?"

I stepped out from under the cedar, and bowed, my indignation coloring me furiously. I saw the glance of surprise in the loveliest eyes I had looked into for a lifetime, and then Dare, smiling like an ass or a seraph, according to the point of view, stepped into the car, and placed his hand upon the lever. Quite gratuitously, I thought, he pressed the bulb. With two short and derisive toot-toots they whirled away over the crest of the hill, and out of sight.

## II

THE next morning I rose an hour earlier, dressed hurriedly, and without my breakfast betook myself to Dare's apartment. He was in his bath, but that fact did not deter me. I was as much at home in his rooms as he himself, and I made for him straight.

"That was a low-down trick of yours!" I exclaimed, breaking in.

"Close the door," he objected. "That draught's cold on my wet skin. Haven't you any imagination?"

I slammed the door, and he shivered for a second.

"Such a time as I had with that blooming Frenchman as the result of your gall! Do you know, the fellow threatened to arrest me? And he made a scene that brought half the Park and all the Zoo about my head."

Dare glowed. As he brandished his bath towel up and down his back, he smiled with absolute enjoyment.

"It cost me a good gold eagle to quiet him," I vociferated, "and even then he might have landed me in the lock-up, hadn't a cop been there who knew me. For God's sake, stop grinning, and get some clothes on!"

As he complied with my suggestion, he began to talk about the girl. After a ride, of the delights of which he spared me nothing, he had been taken in by Mrs. Armitage Strange, and made a hero of. He had had a glorious even-

ing, and they had let him go only on condition that he should return at once, with me, for a fortnight's visit.

"I'll not go a step," I declared, at this.

"But you will that. It's all arranged."

I did not answer, but went through the little study into the breakfast-room. Dare's Jap silently set another place at the table, accustomed as he was to my constant invasion of his master's apartments at all times of the day or night, and withdrew.

I had never seen Dare in better shape than over that breakfast. He was radiant, prodigal of spirit, contagiously good-humored.

"O Tony," he cried, for the dozenth time, "you sober dog, cheer up! Get a smile on! There's the daintiest little widow up there, lots of money. I could love her myself were t'other dear charmer away."

"I abominate widows," I replied, ungraciously. "They never forget that they've the legal right to remind a man that they know all about the follies and foibles of his sex. And they are always out for scalps."

He paid no attention. Fumbling in his pocket, he presently found an envelope, and drew it forth.

"Here's what she is," he exclaimed. "I wrote them coming down last night. Of course it doesn't begin to do her justice."

"Poetry!" I gasped. "Cut it out, Syd. Be a good boy! Besides, I've seen her."

"It isn't long, and it's true. Listen." And he began to read.

"Rotten!" I cried, for I was certainly not going to encourage him in anything like that.

He regarded me for a moment without the light of intelligence, and then tossed a piece of toast at me which fell in my coffee.

"Poets are born," he affirmed, "not made. It is the province of the unborn not to understand, and of poets not to be understood."

In the end I went to The Terraces.

It was enough that I was Dare's friend, and an additional point in my favor that men were in demand just then.

"House-parties are really becoming very serious things, surrounded as they are with the problem of servants and gentlemen," my hostess assured me with a candor of demeanor that endeared. "Besides, you deserved the reward of meeting my niece after your service in her cause the other day. How fortunate it was that it was you and Sydney Dare that came to her rescue! I tremble when I think of what her inexperience might have led her into."

She moved away, with a nod, and I turned to confront the subject of her remarks. I caught my breath at the sight of her.

"And such a scolding as I got," she confided, holding out her hand, "and I suppose I'll get another for speaking to you now without an introduction, but I forgot yesterday that I was in New York and not in the South, where every one knows everyone else, and I'm not forgetting now that I've heard so much about you from Mr. Dare that I think we needn't wait to be introduced. Besides, I listened to what Aunt Julia said to you just now, and that was an introduction."

"I am sure we need not," I murmured, dazed all the same.

"You see," she went on, "I come from such a dear old dry-as-dust place in the South that it is like drinking champagne for me to be here near New York. I keep Aunt Julia in a terrible state of nervousness lest I do something I shouldn't—and I generally do—like letting Mr. Dare doctor that perverse little automobile and then bring me home. Do you think I shouldn't have done that?"

"No," I replied, my heart lurching under those velvet eyes. "I thought it perfectly natural—under the circumstances."

"That's just what I said. Of course I'll never do such a thing again, now."

I was silent. Was she a child or a woman? Surely I had never known before of what loveliness the human

face was capable! She was speaking.

"Tell me something about yourself."

We were on the wide veranda overlooking the Hudson. It was so large itself, and so much a part of the big room opening upon it, that, though others were about, we were practically alone. She sat down on a wide divan, and I piled up the cushions about her. She placed a crimson pillow with deep ruffled border behind her head, and her face, like the exquisite heart of some royal flower, looked up at me. She motioned me to sit beside her.

"Now go on," she commanded.

"I would so much rather listen to you," I told her.

She looked at me out of those "rain-pool" eyes, and some change came over them, as though they darkened with shadow and lighted again.

"Very well, then. First, you are the best friend a man ever had and, second, you do not approve of women."

"It would be utterly impossible for you to prove either statement," I laughed. At the same time, I felt resentment against Dare.

"And why?" she asked, her eyes kindling.

"Because of the limitation of your sex and the infinitude of your femininity."

"Dear me, Mr. Carrington, it would take, I fear, an infinitude of patience to unravel your meaning." She placed a forefinger upon her pursed lips, and regarded me seriously.

An influence unthinking, impelling, overmastering, swept me away.

"My meaning," I said, "is as clear as a man may ever have when he speaks to the woman who has just made him aware that it will always be woman and not women for him evermore. It is not a matter of words nor of patience."

At this point Dare joined us. The sight of him brought me to my senses with a jerk. He placed himself beside me, and threw one arm about my shoulder.

"What do you think of my old Tony?" he asked the girl.

"That your estimate of him, as given me yesterday, needs revision." The words cut across my conscience like whip-cords. Was there a hidden irony in them? I had never seen more pellucid eyes than those into which my own troubled ones looked.

"Stop talking about me," I said crossly. "I'm going out there to make that old man give me one or two of those chrysanthemums he is cutting," and with that I rose and left them.

I was in a whirlwind of contrary passions. God knows that I had never dreamed that love for a woman would come upon me in that way—fierce, torturing, all-absorbing. But now that the first dazzling radiance had been, I saw that hardest of all paths set for the feet of man upon which run strong the counter currents of Love and Honor. Already had my feet stumbled, and my heart been false.

Subconsciously I secured two splendid flowers from the gardener, and returned to the house. It could not be said that I had made resolutions, but I had met duty face to face. Even my return to that corner of the piazza where I could see them still sitting, was in the nature of cicatrizing a burn by the application to it of the fire. Dare's voice came to me, at first without definite meaning, as I drew near.

"I've been counting every minute an hour until this moment. I am not going to let you forget that ride. Every turn of its wheels went right over my heart."

"Poor heart," she murmured, and her eyes fell.

My life had not been without the wine of strong emotion, but its most vivid moment, love's sympathy and its hate, clutched me then.

Dorothy's eyes were still downcast, but something, perhaps the falling from crushing fingers of the white petals of the chrysanthemums, made her look my way. The color came to her cheeks. She nodded at me with perfect composure. Dare got to his feet, and spun around.



"Tony," he cried, after a moment, "we are quits now. That was a mean trick!"

I moved away, throwing the crushed flowers out upon the grass.

### III

My impulse to make excuses and go at once to the city I had resisted out of sheer dislike to turning my back upon opposing forces; but one day, after a fortnight had passed, I felt the need of an uninterrupted communion with myself. In truth the struggle had proved more unequal than I had expected, and I had reached the point where further smiling acquiescence was impossible.

It was then that I had withdrawn from the party that had set out an hour or so earlier for a cross-country ride. It had been difficult; but at length I had won my point.

When they had ridden off, Sydney and Dorothy well to the front, I turned into the house for my hat, the letters I was to write, and which had served for my excuse, at once forgotten. It was about twenty minutes later as I was going through the hall that I ran into Mrs. Strange herself.

She uttered a little exclamation, and passed her hand quickly over her hair, her neck, and her bust.

"I thought everyone gone. Why are you delinquent?"

I smiled.

"Tell me first why a woman keeps the most charming of her costumes for the eyes of other women alone?"

"That is really nice of you, Mr. Carington, but as a matter of fact, women always dress for other women. Only a man imagines that they dress for him."

I pondered this piece of *ex cathedra* wisdom.

"Think it over and judge for yourself," she laughed. "In the meantime, come in here with me, since my *peignoir* does not shock you." She crossed the wide hall, and opened a door through which I had never gone. I followed her now.

"Don't you like my little room? I

tried to make it judicial, you see; no gimcracks. That is a picture of Solomon dividing the child—an awful thing, but it impresses the servants wonderfully. Don't you care for horseback riding?"

"Extremely."

"And that bookcase is full of household volumes, appealing to *chef* and *chauffeur* down to the stable-boy. You are very lucky to get in here, Mr. Carington. It's an honor comparable to being admitted to the pilot-house or the captain's cabin aboard ship."

"I am duly appreciative," I murmured.

"At the same time, I don't see why you didn't go riding with the others. Now just look over that illustrated 'House and Garden.'"

I sat in shadow, and, moreover, as I held the book up it came between me and the door, so that anyone entering the room would not have been apt to see me just at first. Thus, Dorothy coming in suddenly, did not observe me at all. Mrs. Strange dropped the card she was holding.

"You!" she cried.

I felt her lightning glance from the girl to me, but I sat still.

"Bess cast a shoe. Provoking, wasn't it?"

"Who brought you back?"

"No one, Aunt Julia. I punished Mr. Dare by refusing to let him do so. He seemed just as well pleased, however, when I came back, to ride on with Valerie Verlaine."

I put down "House and Garden" at that, and Dorothy started.

"How dreadfully stuffy and dark it is in here," she cried, going to a window and throwing back the shutters, letting in a flood of light in which she took color splendidly. "I do so hate to be startled, and Tony was the last one I expected to find in here."

Her aunt flushed with a color all her own.

"Dorothy," she exclaimed, with pardonable asperity, "you will be the death of me yet. You are very self-willed, and, I fear, a little forward. Since when have you called Mr. Car-

rington "Tony"? I've never heard of such a thing in all my life."

All this time I had not spoken. Very uncomfortable I felt under Mrs. Strange's evident suspicion, very much dismayed at the pumping of my heart at the mere presence of Dorothy. Mrs. Strange rose, arranging her papers.

"Did Bess really cast a shoe? It's very unusual."

"Aunt Julia! Do you think I'd return alone just to get Tony, for you shall ride back with me, Tony, do you hear?"

My pulses leaped.

"Off with you, and get into your clothes," she commanded.

"Why should I not love her?" my heart cried, as I sprang up the stairs to my room. "Why should I not love her?" trumpeted the blood in my veins as I threw aside the clothes I wore and got me into my riding togs. "Why should I not love her?" cried the strength that is a man's weakness, and that made me tremble in every limb. I was to ride with her, alone! The gods of their mercy, or mockery, had thrown me this!

She was waiting for me at the front steps, a groom holding the horses before her.

"Can the letters really wait, Tony?" she asked demurely.

I blinked with the flash of her beauty. As I took her booted little foot in my hand to help her to mount, my senses reeled as with fierce wine. Then I sprang to saddle.

The day of itself was a stimulant of the senses. It sparkled with the clarity of a diamond, and glowed with emerald and sapphire hues on land and river. It was sweet with the breath of wet grass, and in stone-walled orchards the apple-blossoms made a riot of perfume and cool, soft colors. As we passed the corner of an unfenced lawn, Dorothy boldly filched a lilac plume, and flung it on the saddle before me.

For a time we kept on the main road, shady between its rows of trees, through which, to our left, the river gleamed like a sheet of steel. We said but little, the

mere passage of each moment that I had her thus alone tying my tongue as I remembered the flight of the precious day. She seemed to have fallen into a meditative mood, though every now and then she leaned forward and patted her sorrel's satin neck, and once, as though to be impartial in her favors, she reached over and stroked the flank of my horse. Suddenly, she drew rein, petrifying me with a question.

"Tell me, Tony, shall I marry your friend, Sydney Dare?"

That it was not an idle question something in its very audacity made me aware. Moreover, there was no laughter in the eyes that sought my own for a fleeting instant.

"In all the world I know of none whom you had better marry."

Her brows contracted. Suddenly she smiled.

"That, then, is your desire, for him—and, for me?"

"My desire!" I stammered. "Surely that were expecting too much."

Dorothy was leaning toward me waiting for my eyes, her own filled with a comprehension dashed with the sparkle of amusement. There was the most bewitching smile about her lips.

"For God's sake, Dorothy," I groaned, "do not tempt me to be false."

I saw the sensitive lips straighten, and the lights in her eyes fuse into a glow.

"Tempt you to be false," she repeated scornfully. "What a near descendant you are to the original Adam!" The motion of her body, slight though it was, put incommunicable distance between us.

We rode on in silence, the beauty of the day all at once a blur upon my vision. I was wondering how I could, with honor to myself, give her a knowledge of the love which the mere sight of the daintiness of her figure, the mere glimpse of the tilt of her head, was fanning into a consuming flame. I was unprepared for the abruptness of her question.

"What did you mean by what you said just now?"

I held aside the sweeping branch of crab-apple that she might pass under, and some of its weight of blossoms yet wet with the morning's dew fell upon her face.

"That I am not free to love you," I answered, thus declaring my love.

She lifted her brows over eyes more amused than disdainful.

"Then why have you done nothing else, Tony, from the first?"

"I was free to do nothing else."

"What a wretched condition to be in," she laughed, her humor returning in full. "But who is she, Tony? You can make love to me all you want to now that I know you are immune."

I did not smile, and she checked her own levity with a mock seriousness.

"Is it really so bad as that? You don't happen to have a wife, Tony?"

"It is not a woman," I responded, letting the shaft of her raillery fall against my mood.

Her horse came to a sudden halt.

"It's Sydney Dare. He loves you, and he is my friend."

She busied herself for a moment balancing the point of her foot on the handle of her riding-crop as she held its loop on her finger. Surprise, possibly anger, kept her still. I waited for her reproof or condemnation. Presently she spoke with a dainty incisiveness.

"And where do I chance to come in, in this game of give and take?"

Something in the manner of the question sent the blood tingling through my flesh. The law of nature that man should have where he loves stirred within me against the trammels of the centuries.

Laying my hand upon her bridle-rein, I guided the horses slowly down the jeweled lane. Against the purple of the distant hills which loomed in turn against a sky that vibrated of its blueness, rested the billowing masses of the pines, with here and there a spot of foamy whiteness where a fruit tree in full blossom greeted the Spring.

I know not how I began the recital of the story of my long intimacy with Sydney Dare, and of the many bonds

of a mutual service that held us so closely together. She listened to it all with a silent sympathy that sat most sweetly upon her, unconsciously betraying to me a phase of her character which the usual levity of her manner disguised. Then, in my final words, I blundered.

"And now," I wound up, "you see how disloyal I have been; how at the first great temptation I fail him, instead of self-sacrifice put self-indulgence, instead of devoting to him the best that has come into a life I should not now have but for him, I let myself dream of taking from him what would make his own life complete."

Her gesture stopped me.

"Do we live in the Middle Ages that you so easily dispose of your women?" she cried. "In your consideration for yourself and your friend, Mr. Carrington, you deal with me as though I knew no will of my own. Before you dream of taking me from your friend for yourself, and restoring me, both you and your friend shall have to win me."

She pulled her horse into a quicker gait, and took the slight incline at a running walk. Stung by her injustice, and then thrilled by an unbidden delight at her words, I let her go on alone. A moment later, my horse halted with her own drawn across the road before me. She was holding out her ungloved hand.

"Forgive me, Tony. I was horrid, but don't dispose of me so easily in the future. Tell me you are not angry."

I looked into her eyes, and my reason whirled. She smiled, and my throat contracted. Her hand fell on mine lightly as the touch of down, and I seized it, and pressed it to my lips. As I released it, the mounted figures of Sydney Dare and Mrs. Verlaine, clear cut against the blue of the sky, blocked the road before us.

#### IV

STRETCHED out on the couch of our common sitting-room that night, Syd-

ney Dare regarded me with eyes whose predominant expression was one of amused amazement.

"And you are the man who stormed at me for my infatuation, and censored my poetry, and held me guilty of high treason to the ideals of our friendship! You have shattered my confidence in the reliability of human nature—man nature, that is, Tony. But there isn't the slightest use in your packing up your things to go back to New York in the morning."

"No," I admitted, "I suppose not. The mischief has already been done."

"What mischief?" he asked.

"Oh, not that I mean to say the betrayal of the fact to Miss Prioleau that I love her endangers your suit—"

Dare interrupted me here.

"Endangers it—my dear Tony, it has knocked my suit into a cocked hat."

"I am sure not," I groaned.

"You are in love. You are sure of nothing—less than all of the object of your love."

Before I could speak he went on. "Don't think I am laying any particularly flattering unction to your soul. Your heart was the latest target, but the very arrow that is quivering in it so ecstatically now will be shamelessly withdrawn by the archer and used to transfix another. The metaphor has been indulged in before—likewise the pastime."

"Your heart," I returned somewhat hotly, "is so perforated already that no arrow can find a sticking place. Women like Miss Prioleau make the most devoted wives and mothers."

"Possibly. I don't care to marry a wife and a mother."

"Do you not care to marry Dorothy?"

"Whose Dorothy?" he asked, his eyes narrowing.

"See here, Sydney," I said, after a moment, "this is the most serious matter to me. If you love this girl and want to marry her, I'll go my way until it's all over, but if you are merely amusing yourself for the twentieth time, for God's sake be honest with me."

He sat up, and threw himself around, leaning forward with his hands on my knees.

"Dorothy will never marry me, Tony. She has told me so. I believe she will never marry you, and will tell you so if you corner her. I believe also that she will marry no one; though, of course, she thinks she will—some day. Of such is the kingdom of spinsters! Now I never cry over spilled milk, or spinsters in prospective or even your wives and mothers. I want warm kisses for my warm kisses, and without having to go through a developer of years for them, either. Somewhere in this world there is a woman who wants me just as I want her. I think I know where one of them is."

"One of them," I gasped. "You surely intend to stop somewhere?"

He shrugged his shoulders, and lay back among the cushions.

We were silent. Through the stillness of the house, and of the outer night, the bells of some yacht on the river rang out the change of watch. I was trying to realize the fact that I was free to ask Dorothy to be my wife, free to tell her of my love, to wait for her, to work for her, to get her in the end. Suddenly, my breath caught.

"Sydney," I cried, "you are not doing this thing that I may be free to speak?"

"Nary a bit of it, Tony. I tried my best. You may not like to know it, but I'll tell you. It's illuminative. I took her in my arms, and kissed her. She didn't seem to care one way or the other, but she told me not to do so again, and then got off that old gag that she would like to think of me as a brother. I'll never do it again, Tony—to her, you can stake your life on that."

He rose, threw out his arms, and yawned. Then he passed by me, putting his hand on my shoulder as he went on to his room.

It was the next morning after breakfast that as I crossed the large entrance-hall my feet came to a standstill at the sight of Dorothy and Sydney Dare en-

sconced in a window bay, oblivious to the world. It was through a shock of varied emotions that I stood there watching them. A shifting hand upon my sleeve startled me back to my whereabouts.

"Strange that what is so visible to the naked eye the sense of touch cannot discover! I was trying to feel your heart."

"Is it worn so patently?" I managed to ask.

Mrs. Verlaine laughed. She was very pretty, and the sight of her in her lavender gowns had frequently impressed me with the suggestion that, chrysalis-like, she was just ready to burst in to the brighter colors of a new wifehood. She was, moreover, very young, and it was understood that her husband had left her very rich. In spite of my objections to marriageable widows I had always liked Valerie Verlaine.

When I had, obedient to her commands, taken her outside the house, she told me I might see her as far as the little pergola that overlooked the river, just by the wall of the flower-garden.

"Then you must leave me," she said, "for, like the ladies in the old stories, I wish to be alone with my thoughts."

Consequently a few minutes later I turned into one of the gates of the garden. I was struggling against a sense of discouragement the more oppressive in that it had come so close upon my recent hours of jubilation. It was the ugly suspicion that Dare was sacrificing himself upon the altar of our friendship that was stirring in my heart against all the strength of my love and desire.

Thinking thus, I came before one of the many arbors in the garden. As I bent my head to enter the vine-covered doorway, Dorothy confronted me, her finger to her lips. The sudden sight of her would have kept me silent at any rate, even had I not at that moment become aware of Dare's voice, in its most earnest tones, from the pergola just beyond. I had, in my abstraction, doubled on my tracks, and

come back near the spot where I had entered the garden.

I was not master of my wits to catch the words, but I could see by the intent expression of Dorothy's face that she lost nothing. In her absorption, she even placed a hand upon my arm, and I dare not breathe lest she remove it.

"And you are quite as sure," I heard Valerie Verlaine saying, "that you are now as right as you are that you have been mistaken about Dorothy?" With that the slight banter slipped from the voice. "For I could not bear to have you find that you were mistaken about me."

"Never," he murmured. "You are the woman for whom every other woman has but paved the way."

"Oh!" gasped Dorothy. "Just listen to that!"

I held out a warning hand, and she caught it in her own. I knew we were evesdropping basely, but nothing could have stirred me at that moment.

"I can't tell you just how I feel," he went on, "but it is as though every thought I ever had of any woman had been given me as a training for knowing you."

"Oh!" panted Dorothy, "if she only knew!"

I ventured to cover with my free hand her two hands that already were holding mine, and she drew nearer to me, turning her head the better to hear. She had never looked lovelier than in her repressed excitement. I wondered if she felt my body quiver as hers lightly touched it.

"You have filled the world with one meaning for me," Dare was murmuring, "one light, one love. All my life has led to this one moment."

"Just what he said to me," whispered Dorothy, clinging closer to me.

What sound it was I know not. Perhaps it was the absence of sound that made it plain to us that he had taken the little widow in his arms. Then followed the unmistakable sibilance of fervid kisses.

"O Tony," Dorothy cried, "did you ever?"

She was looking up to me, almost a



frightened expression in the wonderful depths of her eyes. A sudden dizziness shot through me, and my arms closed about her. The light of the world went out, but in the blinding moment my lips met hers.

When we came back to earth the silence about was audible. Even the bees had ceased to drone in the honey-weighted hearts of the flowers. Dorothy slipped from me, and, parting the

screen of leaves, peeped out. The pergola was deserted.

"Do you know," she whispered, coming back to the shelter of my ready arms, "I believe they heard our very thoughts."

"If they did," I replied, kissing her lips, "turn about is only fair play."

"And after all," she pondered demurely, "we heard more."



## FRENCH ROSES

By Frank Henty

A ROSE-CROWNED hat surmounts her glorious hair,  
A hat with charms to stay the fleeting glance,  
A river-hat whose ribbon plaitings bear  
The gayest flowers that ever came from France.

And in the shade that slants across her face  
There also flourish roses side by side,  
That match their beauty with the blushing grace  
Of those deep blooms the milliner supplied.

But, as she trips along with dainty air,  
I cannot help but wonder if, perchance,  
Those roses on her cheeks, so passing fair,  
Might also once have found their way—from France!



## FIXING THE RESPONSIBILITY

SISTER SUE—You didn't get home until two o'clock last night.

BROTHER JACK—And how do you know?

"A little bird told me."

"Damn that cuckoo!"



GAUSS—How does your dog like your new neighbor?

MATCHETT—It's a little too early to say. Rover has had only one small piece.

## THE TELEPHONE GIRL

By Tryntje Du Bois

"WELL, yes, sometimes. Of course we ain't supposed to, but it's right absolutely in your ears and sometimes when there ain't a rush we do listen a bit. Oh, yes, it's mighty funny sometimes—say, but no one 'd ever believe the way folks *does* do over a 'phone!

"There was last Friday—I never was so done up in all my life—there was a party and I bet he paid twenty-five dollars if he paid a cent—just to listen to someone think. They certainly did beat all, them two. I was dead tired, but I never unhooked while they was at it—not after I began to catch on. She was in New York an' he was here, an' it was about ten when he rung up. It took about half a nour to get her an' then I heard him say:

"Well, home again?" An' then I was called off, an' when I was free they was still an' I thought they was done. I started to disconnect an'—gee, but you ought to have heard him! He made me so mad I made up my mind I'd listen, an' I did, an' I heard her laugh an' say, 'You swore!' An' then he laughed, an' then he said in quite a nother key, 'Well, can I come?' And then there was silence. I bet that woman thought for more'n a dollar, an' then he asked if he could come again. She said at last, 'You are coming anyway, aren't you?' An' he said, 'Not unless you ask me to.' Then she was still again an' I guess it was two dollars afore he said, 'Won't you ask me to come?' An' then him an' me waited for all of two dollars an' a half. Finally he said, 'You think it over an' I'll call up about midnight.' An' she gasped—yes, she did, it come 'swish' right over the wire—an' then she said, 'Very well,' an' he broke the connection an' I charged

him up with twelve dollars for the slimmest talk I ever overhear.

"Well, at midnight he rung up again, an' we got her pretty prompt an' he asked if she'd ask him to come again. She said, 'I'm thinking,' an' then he held the line an' kept still while she thought every penny of one-seventy-five. Then he said, 'Come, come, say that I may. I'll take the express at two. I can just make it.' Then come another gasp an' then a two-dollar-an'-a-half wait.

"Well, honest, it got on my nerves. I was just wild to know how it would come out. Finally he said, 'You'd better ask me to come,' an' she said, 'Why don't you come anyway?' An' he said, 'No, I won't come 'nless you ask me to.' Then she thought three dollars' worth an' then she said, 'I feel faint,' an' hung up.

"My goodness, you'd ought to 'a' heard the way he give it to me to get that hotel an' her room again. I could get the hotel, but I couldn't get her—an' I tried hard enough, too, but they said she didn't answer. He tried again about twenty minutes later, but she didn't answer.

"Well, the next day about noon somebody else here in town set out to get her. It was a long job on account of being day, an' noon, too. It was all o' two o'clock when we got the number, an' then—well, give you my word, I was near to feelin' dizzy myself—

"For, if you'll believe me, it wasn't *her* as answered the 'phone—it was *him*.

"I guess he thought that it 'd be cheaper in the long run if he didn't wait till she got around to asking him, an' so he just took the night express.

"Looked so, anyhow, don't you think?"

## JOHN ALEXANDER'S SURPRISE

By Eunice Swift Standish

**M**Y better-half being a literary critic himself, and well pleased with his personal achievements, was naturally a little irritated when I told him my own head contained a few burning ideas which were clamoring to shoot forth and scorch an unsuspecting public.

Tact is one of my many charms, if I am compelled to say it myself, so, before I broke the astounding news, I waited until he was pretty comfortably fed. I find a great deal depends on atmosphere. When I wish John Alexander Hancock—for such is my illustrious husband named—to think I am a wonderful woman I always first attend to the creature comforts. I once asked a friend of mine how she so beautifully managed to have her own way. Her reply revolutionized my life. "I feed the brute, of course."

So I waited until John Alexander was abundantly fed, also liberally smoked and comfortably housed in his big, soft Morris chair before I planted myself at his feet, assuming the innocent expression I wear when I am deadliest. Being naturally deep and strong-minded I find that an innocent baby-stare is quite effective upon occasions.

As I sat so humbly at the feet of "patience on a monument," I noticed the expression of John Alexander's face had assumed that pugnacious air it acquires when he has some poor, young, unknown author on the hip—some unpretentious author that his paper doesn't fear.

"First, you know nothing of syn-

tax," his lordship noticed me long enough to say.

Not knowing off-hand exactly what syntax was, it took me no time at all to jump across our small den to the big dictionary and find out that "constructed sentences according to established order" was syntax.

I remember that I once read a little effort to John Alexander. He only removed his large, black cigar—which he inhales and eats—long enough to say:

"You are a good woman, Sarah Jane, but your style is hysterical."

Which shows what a good critic he really is. And after my second rebuff on this particular evening I felt that John Alexander was probably right, after all. I would abandon all hope of entering upon a literary career, and devote myself to humble household affairs and the delightful occupation of giving and going to parties. I told my lord and master, and he sighed with relief.

Very shortly after this some women who know me too well, and a few men, decided to have a surprise party for John Alexander on his birthday. Excitement is the mainspring of my life, and, having thrown down the pen—save to write cute little invitations to my friends—I entered into the scheme with all the enthusiasm of a young thing just escaped from school. John Alexander is such a surpriseable man, anyway, that we could have all the sport of catching him alive for the sacrifice.

I invited some more men—mostly writers, and his cronies—and a few

more women who weren't too attractive to make me feel jealous.

We tiptoed around for days, mysteriously whispering, planning and making ourselves so charming that John Alexander began to worry about me, thinking I wasn't long for this world. He said as much while I was sitting near him darning his socks—not exactly darning, either, for I have a system of my own which is quick and easy. I just run the thread all around the hole, then gather it into a little bunch, carefully wind the darning-cotton around and tie it securely. This is not only quick, but it is effective, as John Alexander seldom has any socks for me to darn. He prefers to economize on smoke money. As I rapidly completed my work I happened to think that the great day was not only John Alexander's birthday, but also the Fourth of July and consequently a legal holiday. It did seem somewhat sacrilegious to be compelled to construct such an edifice of fibs on our honest nation's birthday, but there was no other way.

Assuming an indifference I was far from feeling, I learned by skilful questioning that John Alexander wanted my permission to spend his birthday with another ardent angler, fishing for black bass in Lake Hopatcong. I consented as sweetly as I could, but you may be assured that I accepted the first opportunity to telephone his companion. Insisting on secrecy, I let him into our little surprise and made him promise faithfully to tear John Alexander from the fishing-boat in plenty of time to catch the five-o'clock train for home, so that he could tub, shave and generally refresh himself. He must be ready for his fate at any cost.

They left for their trip on the evening of the third, and when the door gently closed on John Alexander and his guardian angel, a long-drawn sigh fell over my rather prominent chin, and I sank back in a comfortable rocker to plan.

It is no work at all for John Alexander to fish. He sits quietly all day,

sometimes catching only one fish, but often capturing enough to make almost a can of sardines. Angling is a religion with him. He is never discouraged at his unflinching lack of success. He cheerfully digs out his paraphernalia a full month before we take our annual fishing expedition. For several days his evenings had been spent in making preparations, re-wrapping his jointed bamboo pole, oiling his reels, putting new wings on his playworms, and mending those cruel, gaudy flies with which he seeks to befuddle and fool the fish he never catches. The only trouble about fishing is that the big fish insist on jumping overboard just as John Alexander puts the fishing-net under them. I have heard him tell of fish—"monsters weighing twenty pounds, by Jove!"—that would only consent to remain on the hook long enough to wink their fins playfully at him, then coquettishly pirouette away and disappear forever.

The only time John Alexander has been seriously angry with me during our six years of married hilarity was the day I accompanied him fishing and actually caught a fish—a big one!

The mere thought of John Alexander happily puffing a pipe and sitting hour after hour in an open boat in the burning sun, was so calming and peaceful that I was able to plan out nicely how I could jam forty people into our little cracker-box house without injuring anyone.

The next day fairly whirled by until the big clock struck five. Everything was ready but the flowers and a few little things which one forgets until it is too late to remember. Thinking to make myself even more brilliant than usual for this evening, I slipped upstairs for forty winks. When I reluctantly awakened I felt something was wrong, in a gentle, uncomfortable way. My horrified eyes soon discovered that it was quite seven o'clock, and no John Alexander. Being philosophical, I felt certain his angel would safely conduct him to our little heavenly surprise, so I didn't allow myself the luxury of worrying. I was too

busy dressing and arranging the flowers and table. Half-past seven and eight o'clock struck their solemn strokes. Another half hour saw me exquisitely equipped as to outward apparel, but mentally shipwrecked.

When the door-bell rang, feeling sure it was the fishermen, I fairly flew to the door myself to greet—not my John Alexander, but Mr. and Mrs. Dick, the first of our guests to arrive. The sight of Mr. Dick always strengthens me. He is one of those masterful little men who insist upon wearing his collar several sizes too large, which gives his neck such a general appearance of shy modesty. His hair is so dark and shiny it makes one think of a strong little black horse, whose yoke is too big and scratches. His brain is of fine timber, however, and as his hero, Abraham Lincoln, wore his collars so, what does Mr. Dick care?

Mrs. Dick came swishing in with one chubby finger on her lips, to show me she had no intention of being the first one to startle John Alexander out of his usual peacefulness. Her other well-gloved hand had lightly passed to me. Being well-cushioned about the shoulders, she could easily have borne some of little Mr. Dick's many burdens if she would, but I've always noticed that people who can do things easily never do them at all. If a man is a good book-agent, he usually has aspirations for the stage. Many a good washer-woman has been lost in the art of piano-playing.

The bell now rang every minute. Each time I experienced a roller-coaster sensation, and expected to see John Alexander stalk in the door, fish-basket, rubber-boots, pole and all. Thank heaven! there would be no smelly fish, at any rate. Of that I was certain.

Everyone looked expectantly at me. I knew they were all thinking it was high time I hauled John Alexander forth for the sacrifice. When I explained that I had allowed him to go fishing they all breathed easier, and we began to play bid-euchre.

I felt uneasy, and vaguely wondered

if John Alexander didn't come whether they would leave the handsome poker-set they had been kind enough to bring him. The only vice John Alexander can boast is a love for poker—not the gambling part so much as the surprise he invariably experiences when he draws to fill a royal flush—and doesn't.

I was aroused from my reflections by the laugh that followed one of Billy Dean's domestic stories. He was speaking of his wife's love for bargains. He has the funniest head. Before it was fastened on I am sure it must have been covered with molasses and rolled all around in a barrel of fine shavings. Such curly hair is fascinating.

"What do you think happened to me last week?" he was saying.

No one could guess, but we all wanted to know.

"Well," he continued, "last Monday morning my charming better-half started forth with full purse and empty shopping-bag to fight and bleed with the other ten million shoppers in Brooklyn." (There, it's out! We do live in Brooklyn, and I'm not ashamed to look our haughty neighbors across the Bridge in the face, either, even if they do think the world is bounded by the North River, Jersey City, New York Bay and Brooklyn—to say nothing of Hoboken.) "She came home at night," Billy continued laughingly, "with nothing on her hat but a half-crazy feather, her dress a wreck, scratched and weary, but proud of her achievements. She grandly presented me with a pair of remarkably good shoes marked down to three-ninety-eight from four dollars. They were certainly nice shoes, but in her mad excitement she had overlooked the fact that they were built for a woman!"

"How can you be so mean, Will?" murmured reproachful Mrs. Dean, as soon as the laughter subsided.

"Poor little woman cried for two hours, and refused to be comforted until I suggested giving them to the Salvation Army, so now they are on better feet than mine," concluded the irrepressible Billy.

Fortunately for the domestic peace



of the Deans, at that moment the tap of the bell inaugurated a change of tables.

I always have good prizes at my euchres, so, for the next two hours everyone was interested enough in trying to win, to cast John Alexander into oblivion. A bargain sale is tame to a euchre for prizes in Brooklyn.

My little friend, Molly Mapes, was having the time of her life. Between her love of winning the prize and her fixed determination to win another prize in the figure of Jack Spalding—who was a regular matrimonial nugget, fished for by a great many mamas and daughters—the expression on her pretty face was becoming positively strained.

"Have you been out much in Dick's automobile?" Jack asked Molly.

"Yes, but never rode home in it," Molly replied, as she just saved the game by a brilliant bit of risking.

Her intellect is not the deep kind, but it is the way she says things. Then, too, she appreciates herself to such an extent that some of it is bound to reflect a bit on other people. Molly's mind is like a bottle with just a little in it. What there is comes out in a clear, smooth little stream. If it were full the process would be jerky—all tumbling out at once. Nothing ever tumbles about Molly. She sees to it that someone else does the tumbling if there is any to be done.

Mrs. Billy, who happened to be playing against her husband at this time, had her revenge by watching her partner gleefully trump his every ace. That makes a man desperate, so Billy, to give vent to his feelings, shouted to me in his cornet-like voice:

"Strange where John Alexander is! Do you think he could have suspected anything?"

He looked suspiciously at me. We were almost forgetting how our surprise party had surprised us, and were beginning to enjoy ourselves when Billy made us remember that the whole scheme of the evening had gone wrong.

The game ended, and, sure enough, Molly captured the first prize. When I saw this I carefully changed the first—which was a very nice picture—for the second. Molly plays euchre with finesse, but when it comes to art she is decidedly indiscriminating. When I came home from Paris I brought her an etching which was a genuine Veiter. She looked so sweetly at me when she said:

"If it's all the same to you, I'd rather have that little pin you were going to give Mrs. Billy. She appreciates art more than I do. When I buy pictures I always find it so much cheaper to get them already framed."

I could never be angry with Molly, so now I gave her the second prize—a dear little pair of opera-glasses. I say "dear" with a reason. Mrs. Billy, of course, secured the picture. No cloud, however black, can mar the enjoyment of one winning a prize. I know by experience. The only prize I ever won was a picture I afterward hung in the garret, but I came home so excited and with such a headache it took me a week to descend to earth.

It was getting very late, and I was becoming seriously alarmed about John Alexander. What could have kept him? I was sure he suspected nothing, and even if he had he would have sacrificed himself. I knew he cared enough for me to do this.

The only thing for me to do was to serve my little supper and send my guests home, the quicker the better. It was late enough to begin to eat, anyway.

For the next ten minutes we were all trying to solve the old problem—how two things can occupy the same place at the same time—in my little dining-room. This room is usually the pride of my heart with its brick-red walls and dark Flemish oak woodwork—a regular little Dutch treat of a room; but I was so weary and so dejected that even the envious looks Mrs. Dick cast on my panel tapestries and plates I brought home from Holland failed to console me. The rest

of the evening is a sort of vitascopean nightmare. I have impressions, but not registrations.

When everyone had eaten as much as politeness would allow, they filed again, Indian fashion, to the little drawing-room. All hope of John Alexander appearing in time to be surprised was abandoned. To me, sweet solitude, instead of love, seemed the greatest thing in the world. Being alone with no jarring elements was a luxury I had never before properly appreciated.

When my hand had been nearly wrung off for the last time in sympathetic shakings, I took only one little minute to breathe the wonderful relief. Then dreadful visions of my dear John Alexander floating on top of the water, all white and reproachful, appeared before my remorseful eyes. I did something which never happens in my well-modulated life—I wept sorrowful, heart-breaking tears. The whole world seemed as nothing when compared to John Alexander's little finger. Why had I never before appreciated him? His goodness shone out like a brilliant beacon light.

I sat on the bottom rung of the long ladder called Despair. There is said to be always room at the top. I find much more at the bottom. As I knelt, truly penitent, I vowed if John Alexander only came back safe and sound I would never again miss getting up to pour his coffee, his socks should be really darned and his Christmas this year and ever after should be unmarred by my presenting him with neckties or cigars.

All this, and much more, I promised myself in lachrymose earnestness.

Hardly knowing what I was doing—for once I really must have forgotten myself—I sent Mary, who is "monarch of all she surveys" in the kitchen, to the police station, with strict orders to begin immediately the search for John Alexander. I have thought since that I must have been beside myself. The idea of mentioning John Alexander Hancock and anything pertaining to the police in the same breath is a short

step from the sublime to the ridiculous.

As the clock in a near-by tower chimed the ghostly hour of three, I sank into a state of nervous collapse and was about to surrender to what in weaker women I have always scorned as absurd hysterics. I was just saved this disgrace. Was I dreaming, or was that actually the long-lost, mourned-over John Alexander coming leisurely down the stairs in cool pajamas and slippers?

He paused half-way in the doorway and coldly looked me over, from my hair, which in the happy old days he had called a beautiful golden, down to my feet, which were in immaculate patent-leather boots.

I could do nothing but gasp. This day was quite a record-breaker for me. For the first time in my life I couldn't talk. I really thought I had completely lost my wits, but John Alexander, who has always been my balancing pole, brought me back to consciousness by saying in a liquid-air voice:

"Madam, the next time you wish to have guests, kindly tell me before you send me off with such eagerness as you did yesterday. It will save me the trouble of hurrying back to find my wife entertaining my friends in my absence."

I thought his head would roll off backwards as he said "my wife." Each word snapped out like a separate little icicle, and seemed to fall with great regularity, hitting each time my poor, overworked nerves.

Then I made another mistake. An uncontrollable desire to laugh possessed me with the evil strength of a mighty Samson, and I fairly ached with my inopportune mirth. When I was at the highest notch one glance from John Alexander's eye shot through me like an X-ray, and I stopped as suddenly as I began.

At this time I didn't know that he had been sitting up in his own den, directly over the drawing-room, listening at the opening where the steam-pipe came through to our merry-making. He could just catch the indis-

tinct voices, and mistook our troubled evening for a beautiful time.

He had taken the five-o'clock train for New York, and had arrived muddy and tired just as I was taking my siesta. Unluckily, he went into the drawing-room first. When he saw all the decorations and card-tables he began to feel hurt; but when near-sighted Mary, red and important, fresh from the kitchen, came in and moved a large painting of him—which usually rests in the corner because we haven't any room anywhere else for it—out into the little den, his just and righteous anger broke forth in a white heat. He strode upstairs, meaning to unburden his wrath; but when he saw me so peacefully sleeping, with my front hair all done up in rags, a lifelong habit of gentleness conquered and he quietly withdrew without awaking me. Then, like any other martyr, he dressed and sallied forth to his club, to be out of my way. When we were all in the dining-room John Alexander had slipped upstairs, and sat, with dangerous, black looks, "nursing his wrath to keep it warm" for my benefit. There he had been crouching right over us when we had so wanted him! I shall never again put any faith in mental telepathy.

John Alexander does not say much. I suppose no word in the English or any other language was strong, loud or profane enough to express his utter contempt as he walked upstairs, leaving me to my everlasting shame and

discouragement. I spent that night downstairs on our davenport, which few people would ever suspect could be turned into a bed. Several things in our house have double meanings; at any rate, most things are not what they seem. My brain refused to apply its usual Sherlock Holmes ability, and after counting "five thousand black sheep jump over a white fence" I finally sank into sweet sleep.

The sun seemed to roll smilingly up the next morning, just as though my horizon wasn't pitchy black, bringing a wee ray of hope to my aching brain. When I explained to John Alexander how it happened, as he sat moodily behind his morning paper at the breakfast-table, in words carefully selected from my most proper vocabulary, he seemed far from convinced. There are occasions when mere words are inadequate. The way he ate his morning egg made me shiver slightly.

Life has resumed its usual tenor of joy for me. Sometimes I think John Alexander catches himself starting up in his sleep to say he forgives me, but that is when his iron pride isn't protected by his strong will. Unless I have a sick spell and fall delirious I shall never again refer to the unpleasant subject.

The lovely little poker-set which I placed, with all its tempting wickedness, in a conspicuous place on my husband's private table, is a constant reminder, but as yet remains untouched by John Alexander Hancock.



## CHILD OF THE NEWLY RICH

"WAS he born with a silver spoon in his mouth?"

"No; with a silver knife in his mouth."



MIKE—So your wife's in the hospital wid three operations? Is she restin' comfortably?

PAT—No, be gobs—but Oi am!

## WHEN A MAN CHOOSES

By Marguerite Gavin

WE had met by appointment. She stood before me, her Juno-like form erect, her proud face betraying only a languid interest in my words. Yet I did not despair. The coldest and proudest of women may be won, if a man have but audacity and perseverance. And when these cold and haughty ones do yield—ah, how sweet is their surrender!

That she had consented to meet me thus augured well for my success, as did the fact that she carried a small traveling-bag, upon which was stamped in gilt letters her name, Pearle de Armand—a beautiful name, well suited to the woman who bore it, a woman of queenly presence, with the air of one who has always been obeyed.

She gracefully toyed with the large bunch of artificial violets on her bosom. "If I had a few days to decide," she said hesitatingly.

"A few days!" I cried feverishly. "But we must decide today, now. There is no time to be lost."

She shrugged her shoulders and my heart grew heavy with the fear that my impatience had lost her to me. But a dawning smile on her face reassured me.

At length she spoke. "Your wife is out of town, you said?"

"Yes," I answered hoarsely. "She knows nothing—this must be settled before she returns."

Again that maddening, languid smile. "Ought we not to consider her?"

"No, no," I cried. "I will consider nobody—nothing. Come, you must decide quickly."

She turned the heavy bracelet round and round on her plump wrist. "I hate to leave him," she said with a sigh. "He was always good to me."

"Of course, if you prefer—" I began.

"But there was that sister of his," she went on, not heeding my interruption. "She thought she owned the establishment; she was always interfering, she tried to dictate to me—to me!"

"Preposterous!" I exclaimed, nervously glancing at my watch. There was much to be done before the three o'clock train left, the train that was to bear me away to Oakfield and happiness. I paced the floor. I returned to her side and talked to her in earnest tones while she sat idly drumming her jeweled fingers on the arm of her chair.

We spoke of money—alas, that, even in the tense moments when Fate is holding our destiny in the balance, we should have to think of base coin! And oh, the power of gold over a woman's soul!

"When does your wife come back?" she asked, as if delighting in torturing me with questions while she kept me in suspense.

"Not before Monday."

"You are a brave man." She rose and turned upon me the languid glance of her large eyes, while her lips parted in a smile condescending, radiant. "I will go," she said.

I could have danced for joy. But I only said to myself, "She is mine, mine, mine!"

A woman who had been sitting at a discreet distance approached me. "Two dollars," she said, and I handed her over the cash.

Then I went out and wired to my wife, who was staying with her mother at Oakfield:

"Coming tonight for you and the kids. Have had the furnace fixed and found a cook at last. Guess the old house will be habitable now."



## TO ONE REMEMBERED

By Arthur Davison Ficke

THE passage of the many days and nights,  
 The years, the voices, multitudinous deeds,  
 Faces and forms, strange blossoms and their seeds,  
 And all the rack of travails and of fights—  
 From this we come unto the silent heights,  
 Where all the clamor and the rush recedes;  
 And there lies clear the secret spring that feeds  
 The fountain of our sorrows and delights.

Behold, youth fades with every mad desire;  
 Spring burns to ashes in its own sweet fire;  
 And over them the dews of night are wet.  
 But this remains—that sometime One was fair,  
 That past the blinding glory of her hair  
 We saw the immortal light that cannot set.



## SONG

By Charlotte Becker

TO you Love gave his gladness,  
 To me he gave his tears,  
 To you, a Summer's madness,  
 To me, the troubled years.

Yet, which the greater treasure,  
 Ah, who could surely say—  
 Love's day of joy's full measure,  
 Love's grief that bides away?



## WHEN THE BREAKDOWN OCCURRED

WIFE—Huh! I don't know a single good thing about this automobile!  
 HUSBAND (*from beneath the machine*)—Huh! What's the matter with me?